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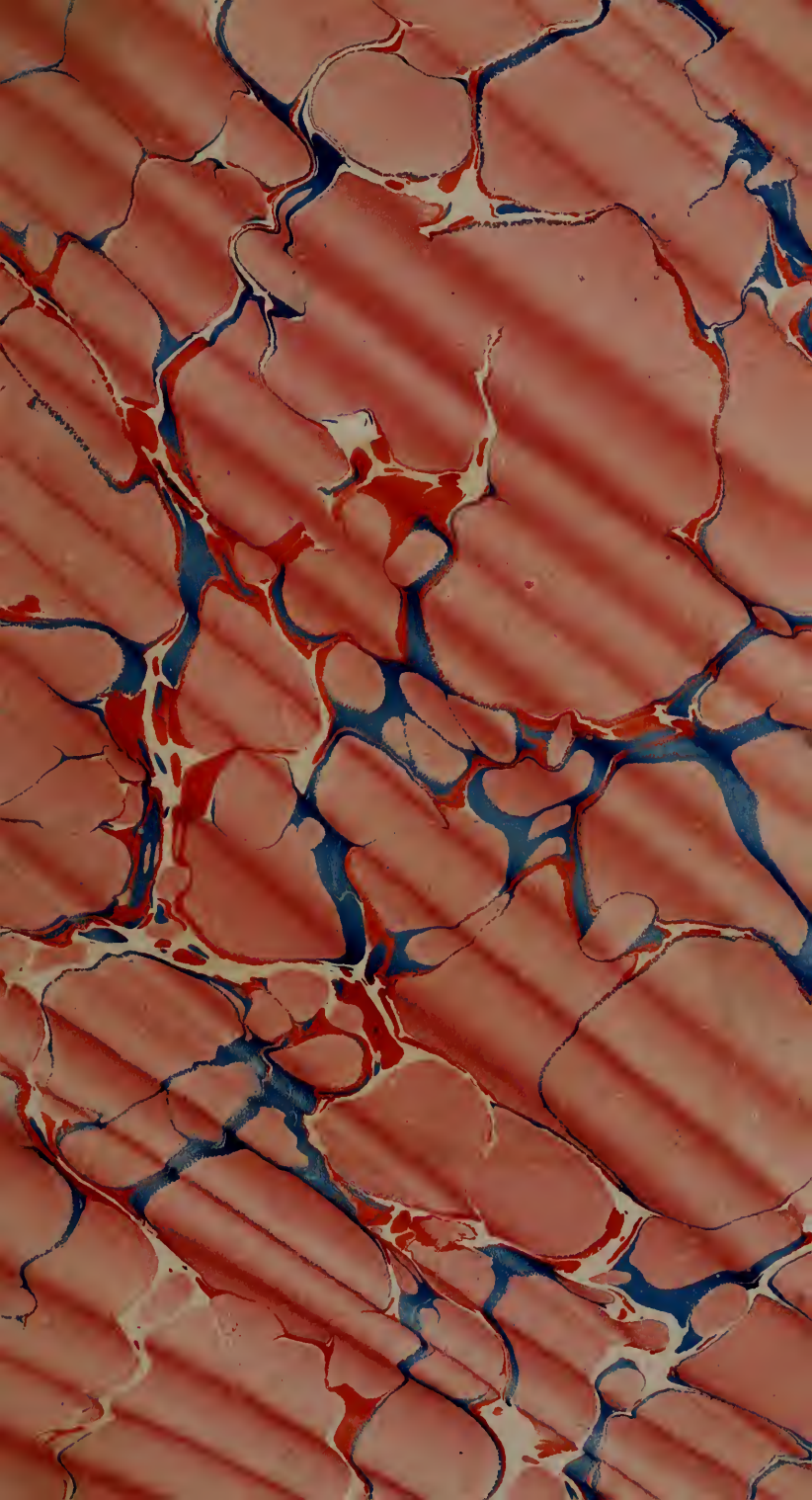

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THE

HUT AND THE CASTLE;

A ROMANCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE ROMANCE OF THE PYRENEES;"
"SANTO SEBASTIANO; OR, THE YOUNG PROTECTOR," &c.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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THE

HUT AND THE CASTLE.

CHAPTER I.

FAUCONBERG now for a moment doubted, if it might not be judicious to delay the perusal of this billet until arrived in the sanctuary of his own chamber; but anxiety to learn its contents conquering every other suggestion, he paused in the first spot he found unoccupied by the noisy revellers, and read: —

"I am now in England. Fear me not! Fly me not!

Ever your stedfast friend,

GITANO."

In amazement, not untinctured by alarm of some mysterious mischief thus implied, Fau-

conberg returned to the ball-room, there impatiently to await the announcing of the carriage, which was to convey him and his friends to Menroy Castle; for by the immediate disappearance of the bearer of the billet, he entertained no expectation of the present being the scene of his re-meeting with his gitano friend.

At length the weary trio of the castle were seated in the coach of Sir Cornelius Lancefield on their return home, when Marchmont, who never performed the penance of silence long, burst out into self-congratulations, upon the beneficial use he had made of his time, during great part of the evening, in accumulating incidents for his tales.

"And by the way," he added, "as I was contemplating the fascinations of the fair cousins of Rosindale Cottage, I was mentally delineating a heroine, who should strike the happy medium which each of these fair relatives have strayed from: for, as you would feel amazed at beholding any thing approaching risibility on the countenance of the beautiful and in-

teresting Alethea; or any thing but playful smiles on that of the animated Olivia; so I mean to prepare a something——one to please you, Fauconberg; a heroine, in whom you may expect to find the bewitching varieties of a feeling mind in all its natural loveliness of season. Hey! what is the matter, Fauconberg? Are you not well?"

"Perfectly well," returned Albert.

"Why, sir, you groaned like a wounded soldier, bearing from the field."

"Possibly I was asleep," said Fauconberg, affecting gaiety, "and in the refinements of your present fancies, you mistook snoring for the more interesting murmur of groans."

"Nonsense!" responded Marchmont, anxiously—"I am positive, sir, you are not well; and so the sapient said to-night. We both agreed you looked quite tame and spiritless; and although in a situation at supper, that ought to have inspired any man in existence with the soul of animation, you were any thing but lively. No—no; this plunge into the dead sea is an unusual freak

for you, Albert: so Netley and I are both of opinion, that you, as well as Cameron, have thrown away that blessing health, by your intense application to your pen, to bear your expenses through this projected mysterious trip to Spain."

At this moment they crossed the drawbridge of the castle; and Fauconberg, without the necessity of replying to these kind suppositions of his anxious friends, retired to his chamber; where, after learning that Cameron had retreated to his bed at his accustomed hour, and apparently in his usual state of health, he made no delay in dismissing Dermod, to whose inquiries, "if his master found himself not well?" he accounted for his dispirited aspect, by complaining of fatigue from the exertions of the evening.

But the malady of Fauconberg was mental, arising from finding himself agitated in so fearful a degree by every thing that bore reference to Alvina. If he could be so sensibly affected by resemblances and allusions, even to uttering audible groans, when Marchmont was un-

consciously portraying the varying sensibility of the too lovely Alvina, what business had he to attempt an excursion into Spain, which must consequently awaken new interests for this too well remembered Alvina; and which might eventually lead him to the misery of seeing her united to his friend; to whom, in her own letters, she had betrayed her tender attachment: and while the meditation of his sleepless morning, upon the certainty of his love being absolutely hopeless, enforced conviction that it must be vanquished; fidelity in friendship commanded his not receding from his voluntary promise of accompanying poor Cameron into Spain, to penetrate the destination of Alvina.

As soon as Fauconberg rang his bell in the morning, Dermod, who had been in his dormitory, anxiously watching for this signal, instantly made his appearance. With a flushed cheek and agitated voice, he paid his morning compliments to his master, and ere Albert had time to demand the cause of this

perturbation, which he with alarm observed, Dermod hastily proceeded:—

"Not, master dear, that myself is worthy a kind answer from your gracious lips, till I am after making to your honour a confession of what I never to my knowledge, since I had a tongue to bridle, ever done before by you. Faith did I, master Albert; I—I returned from the post-office yesterday, with as big a whapper of a lie in my mouth as ever mortal forged to beguile wid."

"Accidentally, of course, Dermod," replied his master, gravely.

"No, that it was not, your honour. Sorrow accident was in it, but as premeditated a bouncer as ever an adept in the art leisurely coined. All the blessed way, every fut of the road from M. to this castle, it tuck me to compose my base coin, and my brazen countenance for bearing me through wid it to boot. For, says I to myself, 'is it master Albert, who has seen my heart from the hour of his birth, like the clear water in the glass he drinks

from; that wo'dn't see through the solid mud of it at onct, upon my guilty countenance, if I don't look innocent, when I tell him this big lie, and not much shame to me for that same?"

"What can you mean?" exclaimed Fauconberg. "You acknowledge the utterance of a meditated untruth, and then add, 'there was no shame attached to it!' What would your father say?—what would mine have said to this, Dermod?"

"Why, master dear, that there was no help for it; and I'll engage, neither of them would be a morsel angry in their hearts. For how, I'd be mighty glad to know, would I have the heart to be depriving you of an evening's elegant amusement, when, Heaven knows, you never take any at all—at all, but scratch, scratch, wid the pen over the paper, from the rising of the blessed sun till midnight, making my heart as black as the ink, wid the gloom of sorrow to see it."

"To the point, Dermod. The words you have dropped, have alarmed me exceedingly."

"Why, then, indeed, myself thought the point might prove a sharp one to your affectionate bussom; and that sorrow crime it would be to sheath it until after the ball. For whin I wint to the post-office for the letters of our garrison, Heaven sent a letter to be waiting for me there, from my darling parents—the blessings on them, dears! and though that same welcome arrival brought glad tidings to me of all being well with them; it did not bring the promise of luck's blossoms for Master Gusty. It brought the news, your honour, 'that the ould squire, who ought to be feeling quite sensibly, one fut in the grave—augh, the ould fool! I ask your honour's pardon for calling one of your kinth and kin, such a proper name. But no blame to me for that same; for 'tis a folly to talk, but all the sense in his head must be quite and clane out of it. The report is, he is going to disparage his rank and his wisdom, by marrying the daughter of that *rappareé*, whom the gallows has long been groaning for, as its too long withheld property—O'Slough, the knave

of clubs, who drives with the shelala of his roguery the cattle of the poor tenants of Fauconberg Castle into his own coffers.

"So, master dear, not doubting all this intelligence was come to grieve you, for the disappointment awaiting your almost too dear brother, I thought there could be no great harrum in keeping back the madam's letter one post. So, here, master Albert, is a letter from your honoured mother, which I made bould to keep in my hands, wid a lie in my mouth, since yesterday, and success to my invention!"

Fauconberg, who had been alarmed still more and more, as Dermod proceeded, until he lost all power of uttering one word to expedite his communications, now grasped the letter with a tremulous hand; pressed it to his lips with dutiful affection; and severing the seal, read, with a palpitating heart, a request from his beloved mother, "to forward without delay to his truant brother an enclosed letter, which she had been induced to write to entreat his immediate return to Fauconberg

Castle; some reports having just reached her, that made it necessary for Gustavus to resume his post, as guardian of his own interest."

The affectionate heart of Albert had never allowed him to breathe even a hint to his beloved mother, of the causes he had for feeling dissatisfied with his brother; she, therefore, knew not that Albert was as ignorant of the abode of Gustavus as herself. However, one channel was open for the possible delivery of the letter to the truant; and Albert lost not one moment in transmitting to the agent of his brother's regiment the communication of his mother, to be forwarded without delay to the hand of Major Rosstrevor.

CHAPTER II.

Although the reports which had reached the ear of Mrs. Fauconberg, and the parents of Dermod O'Chanter, were not exactly correct as to the mode in which the interests of Major Rosstrevor were so seriously threatened, yet there was sufficient mischief impending to teach him some feelings of repentance for his long desertion from the post of interest.

The amiable mother of the present Mr. Rosstrevor, and of the most excellent, as well as most reverend Bishop Fauconberg, had been torn almost suddenly from an affectionate husband and an admiring world, when her elder child was in his ninth year, and her younger in his sixth; and having been heiress to the ancient house of Rosstrevor, she had possessed extensive landed property, which devolved for his life to her husband; and, upon his death, in conformity to common

usage in such cases, was to descend to her offspring, according to the priority of claim in the laws of succession.

Human feelings sometimes flow in eccentric channels. Mr. Fauconberg Rosstrevor — so designated through the property he held — not longer enduring to behold his younger boy, in whom a strong resemblance to the dear departed reminded him too painfully of his recent calamity, he sent him, without a moment's pause, from the paternal roof; out of the way of inflicting tortures upon his sorrowing father's heart, to remain in exile until time should have destroyed the afflicting resemblance, or have gifted the mourner's bosom with the shield of fortitude, to behold this living image of his lost treasure.

Fortunately for the susceptible and almost heart-broken child, his removal was to the protection of a highly informed, polished, and exemplary divine; who kindly undertook to educate the poor alien with his own children.

In this family of domestic harmony, where feminine fascinations spread their most aus-

picious influence, was Bishop Fauconberg reared; imbibing from domestic scenes of happiness much that led to his own connubial felicity, and to those social acquirements which established him as the ornament of society, the friend of all who required his aid, and the idol of his own flock and fire-side.

The heir of Mr. Rosstrevor unfortunately bore no resemblance that could wring his father's heart; he therefore received his education beneath the paternal roof under the tuition of a preceptor.

The vacant chair which his lamented wife had so gracefully filled at the festive board in Fauconberg Castle, also wounded the sensitive feelings of Mr. Rosstrevor so excruciatingly, that he filled it, very pleasingly to the eye, in exactly six months after the demise of his much deplored better half.

But Mr. Rosstrevor soon discovered that he had not restored domestic peace to his bosom by this hastily elected successor to his first choice; for ere the second honey-moon had entered on its wane, the new Mrs. Rosstrevor

had banished peace and harmony from Fauconberg Castle.

From this continued state of domestic hostility Mr. Rosstrevor at length fled to another description of domestic establishment, where the smiles and allurements of mercenary blandishments reared a deceptive bower of sublunary peace for him. A rapidly increasing family augmented his attachment to this degenerate establishment. Fauconberg Castle became less and less favoured by the presence of its master; and his only child there was left to the care of his tutor, and to every misery the outrageous temper of his termagant step-dame could inflict upon him, whom she hated in envious irritation, because she had presented him no rival in the affection of his father.

At length, after the endurance of fourteen years of undeviating domestic misery, the heir of Fauconberg Castle completed his majority. To the surprise of the young man, his father appeared at the castle to celebrate the event; and, with such a show of conciliating kindness

to his long neglected heir, that, inspired by it, the young man ventured to entreat "that an establishment might be immediately formed for him, apart from Mrs. Rosstrevor, where he might sometimes have the gratification of holding intercourse with his brother, whose fame at college had reached his ears."

To these entreaties his parent—taught dissimulation by the embarrassment he had woven around himself—most readily replied, with kind acquiescence; but to this compliance was annexed the proviso, "that he immediately joined him in cutting off the entail on the Rosstrevor estates, to enable him to provide, according to his fond wishes, for his numerous offspring and their artful mother." The young man, secure in the Fauconberg property, which could not be dismembered from entailed succession, knowing little of the value of the property he was thus called upon to dismember, and quite as little of any worldly guile, except that of deceiving his step-mother by every means that art and falsehood could devise, in order to turn her wrath

from him and his confederates, was only awake to his own interests in getting away from the Fauconberg inquisition; and, without a moment's hesitation, complied with his father's alternative for the completion of his own wishes.

The entail of the Rosstrevor estates was accordingly reduced; but, ere Mr. Rosstrevor had time to make the sacrifice of the interest of his legitimate children as complete as he meditated, his sudden death destroyed his power. However, although the illegitimates were much more amply provided for than the younger son of his first wife, from whom this means of provision had been derived, the new head of the family had sufficient wealth reserved to him, to make him the mark for many an interested speculation to aim at.

Amongst the first of these speculations was the efforts made by his father's widow, through artful blandishments to win upon the new master of the castle, to invite her to remain as its mistress; but this speculation proved unsuccessful; and even when, compelled by

disappointment to drop the mask of gentle persuasion, she pronounced her determination to remain, the new Mr. Rosstrevor was firm in his order for her departure; an order which he empowered his sworn colleague and tutor, Mr. Bibberbuck, to enforce.

The moment this most desirable clearance was effected, Mr. Bibberbuck proposed "that the old castle of discord should be immediately changed to that of comfort; from which, as the unruly temper of the late termagant ruler had, by affronting her guests, driven the whole race of womankind, they should keep the portal shut against them still."

"For then," continued Mr. Bibberbuck, "we shall be able to do as we like, and we shall have the snug places at the fire-side, and at table, with our favourite dogs to bear us company, without fear of demolishing furniture, or women's annoying furbelows. Upon sporting days we may turn in to dinner, in whatever plight we list, and quaff whatever beverage our palate calls for; sing, or roar, what jolly madrigals we like; and tumble

under the table, or over the table, as it best suits our trim."

In short, from this hour of emancipation, "indulgence" was to be the watch-word of the garrison; and it was so. The domestics having been bowed down to the earth under the tyranny of their late despotic ruler, the new administration determined they should feel most sensibly the happy change, and the tolerant law was proclaimed, "That except for dishonesty and lies, none were to be rebuked, much less punished." The consequence of such laxity in government may be well imagined.

The unvanquishable antipathy to the female character which Mr. Rosstrevor had imbibed from the unfeminine violence and unamiable disposition of his father's second wife, and in humble life, through the arts he had witnessed upon all occasions in Fauconberg Castle, compelled by the arbitrary cruelty of their mistress to cheat and deceive her, led him early to determine against a wedded life; a determination encouraged and strengthened, through

every means they could press into their service, by Mr. Bibberbuck, his son Oliver, and his son-in-law Mr. Snuggs — an attorney, whose suspicious character had caused his professional ruin, and who, with Oliver Bibberbuck, had accepted free quarters at Fauconberg Castle — Oliver, to act as amanuensis, or secretary, to his young patron; and Snuggs, to take from the shoulders of the young squire, upon his own, all the business of the quorum, as well as those law concerns which might have borne more heavily upon the time of Mr. Rosstrevor, than his natural indolence and taste for indulgence could have tolerated.

In fearful omen to the sinister designs of these three unprincipled satellites, Mr. Fauconberg, in orders and married, was unexpectedly presented by the bishop of the diocese to the living of Glennorah, a parish adjoining that in which Fauconberg Castle was situated.

The fraternal rapture expressed by Mr. Rosstrevor upon this unlooked-for presentation, boded no good to this hopeful trio;

and it would require, they feared, all the subtle manœuvring of which they were masters, to ward off effectually the threatened destruction to their interests. But the juvenile volatility of the young bride soon revived their hopes, and yielded them materials to work into family disunion.

Mrs. Fauconberg, young, beautiful, and highly educated — the idol of a husband, to whom all the wise and good paid homage, as a rising genius, born to do honour to science and his country — Mrs. Fauconberg, with spirits elevated by the high pinnacle of happiness on which she stood, had scarcely made a visit at Fauconberg Castle, ere she perceived how totally unlike the beloved of her heart, in sentiment and manner, his brother was; nor conceiving that any thing so unamiable as abstract selfishness could dwell in a heart so nearly allied to her husband, she attributed all the eccentricities of Mr. Rosstrevor to premature old bachelorism, and sportively rallied him on every propensity she could descry to this unsocial state.

Had Mr. Rosstrevor's eccentricities sprung from what his playful sister ascribed them to, he would have taken her raillery in better part; but "the still small voice within," assured him they arose from nurtured selfishness. Conscience-stricken, he felt hurt and offended; and the designing trio found it no difficult task to fan this fire of scarcely smothered resentment into a flame.

For his brother's sake, Mr. Rosstrevor contrived for a time to smother his resentment; but, the moment Mrs. Fauconberg removed from the castle to the rectory at Glennorah, he wrote to his brother to express every thing kind and affectionate towards him; but, at the same time, to intimate, as delicately as his irritation would admit of, "that Mrs. Fauconberg was never more to become his guest."

As a professor of Christian forbearance, Mr. Fauconberg checked his own rising indignation, at this unmerited insult offered to his amiable wife; and as far as his feelings of dignity permitted, endeavoured to restore Mrs.

Fauconberg to the favour of his brother. But the secret impeders of his success were too powerful for his fraternal influence to overcome. Mrs. Fauconberg was absolutely never more to be received at the Castle; and, in consequence, the visits of her husband were confined to a formal morning call once in three months; and no importunities of hers could induce her affectionate husband to give up this mark of his resentment for indignity offered to her.

As time went on, family pride arose to take part in the selfishness, which the habits of Mr. Rosstrevor were daily strengthening, and he began seriously to ponder upon a successor. To his really loved brother's succeeding him in the family possessions, he never could for one moment turn his thoughts as to a possibility; "for," he would say to Mr. Bibberbuck, "for, although by some inexplicable cause, my brother's aspect stands still in the appearance of thirty, whilst mine has wandered on to sixty; yet our real proximity in age renders it a joke to think of him as my heir."

Besides this obstacle to his brother as his possible successor, the torturing idea that in that case Mrs. Fauconberg would enjoy his wealth, presented an insurmountable barrier to such a supposition; and this suggestion, once awakened, recurred so frequently, that at length he determined upon an heir, who should not aggrandise his hated sister-in-law, at least with the Rosstrevor wealth, and accordingly wrote to his brother to remind him —

"That, as the Rosstrevor estates were no longer entailed, he could leave them to whom he listed; and that if he wished them to go in succession with the comparatively small one of Fauconberg, he would give up his boy Gustavus to be adopted as his son, and to be educated under his own wary eye, by the worthy and competent Mr. Bibberbuck, who had so ably and conscientiously reared the present inheritor of the family possessions."

Mr. Fauconberg knew as little of the interior of Fauconberg Castle as those who had never known its name. Blinded by fraternal partiality, he saw not any thing to censure in his

brother, but his unjustifiable prejudice against Mrs. Fauconberg. Mr. Bibberbuck, a master of arts in the most literal sense, had ever worn before Mr. Fauconberg the winning aspect of all that was estimable. He knew him to be far from ignorant in classical learning, and of his religious principles being unquestionably orthodox he had presented proof presumptive to the world from his pen. Added to all these motives for compliance with the wishes of his brother, Mr. Fauconberg found the revenue he possessed scarcely adequate to the benevolence of his spirit; and feared, that at his death, which he felt persuaded would not be a remote event, the provision for his beloved family would be very incompetent.

These, combining with other causes which it is unnecessary to mention, ultimately led to the surrender of Gustavus to be adopted by his uncle; Mr. Fauconberg fondly hoping, that one advantage to the family of Glennorah Rectory would result, through this sacrifice of parental feeling, namely, that Gustavus, who had always appeared attached to his mother,

would soon win his uncle to take her into favour.

But this natural expectation was not realized. The policy of Mr. Bibberbuck and his associates was, by insidious wiles, to weaken, if not destroy, the attachment of Gustavus to his family and to all domestic ties, by the subtle introduction of all those selfish principles which actuated every one around him.

The attachment of Mr. Rosstrevor to his nephew became so manifest, particularly after the universally lamented death of Bishop Fauconberg, that the Bibberbucks and Mr. Snuggs, in alarm for their own views, determined upon the separation of the rich man and his heir. Oliver Bibberbuck had acquired a great ascendency over the mind of Gustavus, and it now became his plan to introduce into his mind a love of martial glory, which terminated in his entering the army, in despite of all his uncle's wishes and remonstrances.

This obstinate dereliction of him was keenly felt by Mr. Rosstrevor, who ascribed it to ingratitude and want of affection in his nephew,

whom he loudly reprobated for leaving him, he said, in such a moment, "when he had, alas! no longer a brother to console him."

To fan this jealous irritation against the absent Gustavus was now no task of difficulty. The few families in the neighbourhood with whom, to please Gustavus, he had held intercourse, now, as the friends of the truant, Mr. Rosstrevor broke with; and wholly devoted to toping, indolence crept in more and more with intemperance, and some symptoms of gouty affection seemed to threaten Mr. Rosstrevor in room of the domestic ones he disregarded. A resident doctor was therefore recommended by the designing relatives.

"With all my heart, if you can light upon one convivial like ourselves," said Mr. Rosstrevor.

"Confound all water drinkers! We'll have none such," they replied. And accordingly one ready for the post appeared immediately to regulate the health of the prey on whom they had fastened: Doctor Butcher, whose patients happening to lose their lives whilst

under his care, had lost all patients to care about; and full as ready to share the booty his friends the Bibberbucks and his cousin Snuggs were aiming at, he joined the hopeful party of these specious confederates in villany.

Oliver being the amanuensis of his patron, and the reader also of his own compositions, Mr. Rosstrevor not undergoing the trouble of reading for himself, the villanous amanuensis could send any style of letter he pleased to Gustavus as the dictates of his uncle's mind; and could also deliver and read to Mr. Rosstrevor exactly as few epistles from Gustavus to his uncle as coincided with his purpose, and with such alteration in them as his diabolical projects fabricated.

The irritation, therefore, of mutual jealousy became stronger and stronger between the uncle and nephew; and when our gallant troops had completed their glorious career upon the Continent, and returned to the half-pay awaiting them, Gustavus, full of resentment towards his uncle for many an unpalatable expression and undeserved censure which had

reached him under his name, would not condescend to turn his thoughts to Fauconberg Castle, without a regular and pressing invitation; and as his ample allowance was punctually remitted to him as usual, and which he did condescend to accept, he set off for Bath, Cheltenham, &c. thus to send conviction to his uncle's mind of how deeply seated was his laudable resentment.

However, there were others employed in conveying to the mind of Mr. Rosstrevor very different impressions relative to the lengthened absence of Gustavus, which was placed in every point of view favourable to the interests of the whole domestic forces of Fauconberg Castle; the master of which was subdued by his own indolence and intemperance, and the deleterious quackery of Doctor Butcher, into a helpless occupant of a Merlin's chair.

The moment Gustavus returned from France, and, through his reduction to the half-pay list, had resumed the power over his own actions, it became necessary to make no further delay in striking the blow so long in train.

The confederates, in searching out every thing relative to the property they meant to invest themselves with so large a portion of, had ascertained, that when Mr. Rosstrevor had adopted Gustavus Fauconberg for his son, and regulated all points for his change of name, that he might no longer bear that which designated his mother, he had, in the deed of settlement, introduced a clause, importing, that all he thus settled upon Gustavus was to become null and void, should he leave an heir apparent; a clause which he merely had inserted to suspend as a rod of menace over the son of his adoption, should he do any thing to draw it forth; and this implied threat having been resorted to by order of Mr. Rosstrevor, to induce Gustavus to return from the Peninsula, most probably had awakened the project of having the threat fulfilled.

Mr. Rosstrevor's bailiff, or middleman, O'Slough, had a daughter,—a fine, bold, smart, showy damsel of eighteen,—who, being niece to the housekeeper, Mrs. Crammer, had ingress

to the Castle whenever it pleased her relative. The domestics of this freehold used no ceremony in respect to the number of their kith or kin entertained at their master's expense, so long as they kept compact with him, in not suffering the female clans to run wild about the premises, or to stray into his sight. Miss O'Slough was soon, however, made an exception to this general rule of compact; for, without the ceremony of permission from "the master," her aunt ushered her into the invalid's apartments, loaded with newspapers, books, and "parlour work," as if prepared to make a long sojourn there.

The amazed and indignant owner of the Castle demanded the cause of this presumptuous intrusion; and without any impeding hesitation from urbanity, ordered the stranger to quit the room.

"*Musha* then, master, you have no call to be mad, let alone to bid the poor dashed cratur to be getting out," exclaimed Mrs. Crammer, in the true and genuine whine of

specious palaver, as she waddled round the table she was preparing for the accommodation of her simpering niece.

"*Augh*, then, is'n't entirely obliged to your luck your honour ought to be for sinding such an elegant windfall to you, whin 'tis on the *shaughraun* yourself is lift for some one to davart you? Is'n't she the only reader in the Castle that can do that same, widout spelling every cramp word in the way? barring Oliver Bibberbuck, whom yourself says has such a divil of a twang, and makes such a ditty out of all he reads, that it is setting you to sleep he is."

In vain Mr. Rosstrevor frowned and gnashed his teeth—to stamp his feet was no longer in his power—uncourteously repeated his mandate for the departure of the stranger, and issued orders for Mr. Bibberbuck to be sent to him immediately.

"Why sure, that's what I am telling your honour," responded Mrs. Crammer, dropping her unsteady dot by way of curtsey. "Sure, both the Bibberbucks and Val Snuggs are

gone wid my brother, Mr. O'Slough, to drive ould Murphy's cows, the *rapparee!* that never willingly pays widout force, and bad luck to him!"

"Confound them!" exclaimed Mr. Rosstrevor. "How dare they do it without my orders?"

"Bekease, your honour, theirselves say, 'they might wate long enough for that same; and that, if you had your will, every rogue on the land would thrive, barring your honour;' and so, to fill the coffers for them that desarve the luck of it, they are forced to be a little sharp sometimes."

"Sharp! inhuman! They shall smart for this," muttered Mr. Rosstrevor.

"Faith will they smart from the could this frosty morning; but, feared your honour should miss them, they sint this poor dashed girl here to davart you; for her's is not the tongue clad in the bog-trotting brogue of Oliver Bibberbuck; but in a nate elegant English slipper, that will run like your best racer through every course of reading, even upon French ground,

let alone English; for didn't she go from an English boarding school to a nunnery in Paris to finish her? And so herself can tell your honour all about the English army, and Mr. Gustavus to boot."

The indignation of Mr. Rosstrevor was now tremendous. Vehemently did he inform Miss O'Slough, "she had the impudence of the d—l;" and Mrs. Crammer, "that she had the audacity of all the members of Pandemonium." Again he commanded their absence.

"The sorrow absentee will your honour find in either of us at present," responded Mrs. Crammer. "*Augh!* then, your honour, be easy, though your gout won't, and bad manners to it! and don't be quarrelling wid your luck. Sure, besides her being the rail dandy of a reader, herself is as light-fingered as the passing breeze, and 'tis off and on she'll be slipping the flannels from your gouty members unknownct to your honour."

"She be ———!" exclaimed Mr. Rosstrevor: but, though tremendous the imprecation, Miss O'Slough remained undauntedly, to

display to more advantage the beauty of her teeth and dimples, by an increase of smiles.

"The ould limping news-boy, your honour, toult below 'that there is bushels of elegant news in the papers to-day,'" said Mrs. Crammer. "I'll be bail, now, we shall see Mr. Gustavus amongst the arrivals at Brighton, and making up quadderill parties for the ould ladies there, as I seen he done at Cheltenham last week in the papers. *Musha!* then, myself thinks he has no call to be so very mannerly to the ould ladies, whin he has no nathur at all at all for ould gentlemen. *Augh!* then, what is it I am talking about? Bekease you are crippled a morsel wid that gout, and bad luck to it, the torment! myself keeps heaping years upon the head of you, whin I, who am in the prime of life, am tin, that is, twinty months and tree weeks oulder nor your honour. But Biddy O'Slough there takes the years off of you; for 'Ough! murder! aunt,' says she, 'why 'tis a chicken you are making of yourself, for you look twict as ould as the squire.'"

"Biddy O'Slough is a palavering hum-

bugger!" exclaimed Mr. Rosstrevor, peevishly; and now convinced that mandates were useless to those determined against obedience, he sulkily leaned back in his chair with closed eyes, resolved not to open them, nor to speak, nor appear to hear, hoping through this manœuvre to wear out the perseverance of the intruders. Thus consigned to rumination, his thoughts took various routes; and after meditating upon the web he had spun around himself, through unnatural hostility to all the ties of kindred, his heir next reverted to his pensive musing; and his apparent strange ingratitude grating on his lorn heart, he at length felt a powerful wish to learn, if the suggestion of hearing of him in the papers just arrived were correct; and as there alone he was now likely to hear of the truant ingrate, he impatiently longed for the return of Oliver Bibberbuck, to read to him.

But as the day advanced without the return of Oliver, and as his anxious wish ungratified seemed to irritate his painful malady to new tortures, he felt compelled at length, for

once, to tolerate Miss Biddy for a reader; when, sorely against the grain, he was obliged to acknowledge, though only mentally would he do so, "that he should benefit materially in a reader if his governors had superseded Oliver in that capacity for Miss O'Slough."

From this day of bold intrusion, Miss Biddy completely established herself in the apartments of Mr. Rosstrevor; the poor helpless invalid, perforce, compelled to listen to her when she set out "in her elegant English slippers to davart him;" either in her course of reading, or in relating anecdotes of Gustavus that never happened, but plausibly related as having come to her immediate knowledge whilst at Paris, and all most artfully fabricated to irritate the poor susceptible invalid against the son of his adoption.

But this establishment of pretty Miss Biddy O'Slough in the *boudoir* of the Squire, no matter how effected, once known in the servants' hall, all combined in the natural expectation from such an unthought-of event, and augured all that was inimical to the interests

of Major Rosstrevor. However, as all were more or less engaged in the general league for enriching themselves by the spoil they were all bearing their part to seize, the expectation thus awakened would never have reached beyond the walls of the Castle, where it was for the common advantage to confine their hopes and projects, had not a trump blazoned it forth that none of the confederates were prepared to silence.

Simple Thady, of the order of itinerant mendicants, who, by a display of combined idiotism and insanity, whilst profound cunning lay closely concealed within, obtained an ample livelihood by visiting a certain number of houses in the rounds of his perambulations; where, by jest and mummeries, he plagued or lured the domestics out of ample commons and a well-stocked wallet. As there was more to be got at Fauconberg Castle than in any spot he visited; and as his talents for "davarting" were more in request there than where there was more business to employ those he entertained, simple Thady made longer tarri-

ance there than elsewhere, and picked up more of the family politics than this commonwealth were in the least aware of his shallow pate being able to retain; and having taken in something of the expectations formed upon Miss Biddy O'Slough's establishment in the Squire's *boudoir*, and with them full in his mind, he repeated them in the next house he called at for alms, which happened to be the priest's.

Father O'Calaghan, the priest of Mr. Rosstrevor's parish, had once been the Catholic pastor of Glennorah, whom Mr. Fauconberg considered as a fellow shepherd, leading, by a different path, a flock to the fold of one gentle Master; and, therefore, treated him as a brother and a friend, going hand in hand with him in all that could benefit their mutual flocks, and only viewing their interest as separate in those moments when their respective modes of worship demanded that distinction.

At the rectory of Glennorah there was ever a bed, a cover, and a sincere welcome for Father O'Calaghan; and at the palace of

——— the same welcome and regard, when even no longer neighbours. Their friendship continued through the Bishop's life, and lived after his death in the grateful mind of Father O'Calaghan, who loved the children for the sake of their sire, and respected Mrs. Fauconberg for her own. He often, therefore, called upon those in their cottage whom he had known in a palace, never omitting an opportunity of evincing paternal regard for them all; and often, when visiting the Squire of Fauconberg Castle, he ventured to speak of the amiable individuals of Glennorah Cottage, and always in such a manner as he hoped would awaken interest and esteem.

But by this plan of disinterested kindness, Father O'Calaghan alarmed the confederates, who consequently manœuvred him out of their patron's favour, and for a length of time he had ceased to gain admittance into the Castle: but the moment simple Thady made his communications relative to Miss O'Slough, the reverend father determined his magic influ-

ence should penetrate where he in person could not; and after having set his plans in train, he hastened to Glennorah Cottage to impart to Mrs. Fauconberg the intelligence which he had obtained.

CHAPTER III.

Before we proceed with Fauconberg to join the breakfast board of his friends on the morning of the eventful day which succeeded the masqued ball of Lady Lancefield, it is necessary to make some communications relative to the lovely being who had so deeply interested him, as well as to some other individuals to whom our readers were introduced during the perilous adventures of Albert in his hut, and in the valley of Santa Barbara.

A *Madrileno* *, named Gasper Peralta, happening to be in London upon business relative to a late bequest to him, was heard of by an English nobleman, who, in consequence of conjugal discord, was about to send his almost infant daughter to the protection of her mother's family in Madrid, and engaged by

* A man born in Madrid.

him, for a handsome gratuity, to convey her and her attendant to the care of Don Ferdinand de Verodia. The respectability of Gasper Peralta, as an escort, bore the strictest investigation amongst the Spanish merchants in London, to whom he had brought recommendations; and the attachment and tenderness of the nurse to her young charge had been so manifest, that the humanity of the English peer felt quite at ease relative to those with whom he thus intrusted the innocent victim of unfounded jealousy and base calumny, the young Alvina Dudley.

Most calamitously the vessel in which Lady Alvina embarked was wrecked on its voyage to Spain, and, melancholy to relate, not one female on board escaped, except the lovely child, whom Gasper Peralta conveyed to Madrid, with the letters which presented her claims upon the protection of Don Ferdinand de Verodia.

As Gasper Peralta was merely an agent for the safe conveyance of the child, so calamitously alienated from the protection of her

parents, he had nothing, therefore, to do in any negotiation with the family she was consigned to; and would most probably have made his final bow to the Verodias, had not his *protégée* been so young, so interesting, so helpless, so lovely, so unfortunate, that Don Ferdinand, aroused to almost parental feeling for her; and convinced by every circumstance attendant upon her almost miraculous rescue from a watery grave, how tenderly humane her preserver must have been, — importuned him to seek out an attendant for his late charge amongst his own female kindred; or at least, amongst those of kindred feelings.

It so happened, that Gasper Peralta was a devoted worshipper of Plutus; and in his passion for gold had considerably injured his own small property by ill-advised speculations, amongst which had been his expedition to England; the unavailing expenses of which the bounty of Alvina's father had amply covered; but that remuneration had nearly been swallowed up by the merciless billows. Having no claim upon the generosity of Don

Ferdinand for the reparation of his losses by shipwreck, he had forborne to make any intimation respecting it; but, upon Don Ferdinand's request for seeking out a nursery attendant, it suddenly occurred to him, could he induce Marcella, his wife, to offer her services, that, in consequence of the Don's apparent distress for such a domestic, they might be able to make most advantageous terms for themselves.

Marcella Peralta, believing that such a confidential situation in the Verodia family might, through her conscientious performance of her duty, prove of service in the advancement of her only child, Lopez--a boy then of about thirteen years old—lulling the murmurs of her ancestral pride, took upon herself the office of the young stranger's principal attendant; and accompanied her to the protection of the venerable Donna Ellena de Verodia, the aunt of Don Ferdinand, then the abbess of the convent of Santa Barbara.

The monotony of a child's life in a secluded monastery, affords us little to relate of the

nurseling of Marcella, until upon the death of her father, a safe convoy arrived to bear her to the arms of her mother, in England; but, alas! on her arrival in England, the most bitter disappointments and affliction assailed her. But these being connected with other circumstances, which it would be premature to relate here, we must for the present postpone the adventures of the lovely *protégée* of Gasper Peralta in her native country.

After having formed in England the most tender ties of affection her young heart had ever glowed with since the moment she had been torn from her fond mother's arms, Don Ferdinand appeared to claim as his right the power of protecting this singularly isolated young unfortunate. Those, who would have yielded their life to purchase good for Alvina, had no power to contend with Don Ferdinand for a right which a combination of misfortunes had given him to the guardianship of his niece; whom he took from all her heart clung to in her native country, and once more placed beneath the sombre roof of Santa Barbara;

where, to her unfeigned regret, she found, that during her absence, the venerable abbess Donna Ellena had been summoned from this world to a better.

A successor to Donna Ellena had been promptly nominated, also of the Verodia family; for the monastery of Santa Barbara having been founded by one of the early ancestors of that house, the perpetual nomination to the supremacy was vested in the succeeding representatives of the leading branch.

The new abbess, Isabella of Verodia, to whom Fauconberg was subsequently introduced by the lovely fugitive he protected from the *cortijo* of Marcella, was scarcely forty years of age when she became superior of this convent; though even then she appeared considerably older, so ungenial had mental suffering proved to juvenility of aspect.

Sister Lucella, the senior nun of the community, who had always been much attached to Alvina, received the almost heart-broken girl from Don Ferdinand on her return from England; the abbess being at that period con-

fined by severe indisposition to her cell; and several days elapsed, before she considered herself equal to an interview with the young stranger.

But the moment the interdict to meeting was removed, a strong attachment between the lady abbess and Alvina became manifest to all around them; and very shortly, the latter had not a thought within her bosom relative to her own history, her own hopes, her own wishes, unconfided to the abbess of Santa Barbara; who had thus made her rapid way into the affections of her ingenuous *protégée* by the certain road of permitting her unrestrainedly to talk of her hero, Xavier Almedina, as all that was great and good; and in the house with whom she had sojourned during the time of her last stay in Great Britain, and from whom she had acquired those mental stores she deemed her most precious treasures; and soon she seemed to teach the abbess so much interest for this highly gifted, but unfortunate Xavier, that she not only permitted the subject, but at

length appeared to court it, as one that, through some magic influence, had power to lull her own mental miseries to temporary rest.

Upon the causes of those sore mental afflictions, the interesting abbess made no confidant within the walls of her monastery: but Don Ferdinand appeared fully acquainted with their source; for when at his *quinta*, in her immediate neighbourhood, he often visited her, and frequently spent hours in conference with her; which were uniformly observed to have the effect of increasing his deep melancholy, and of overwhelming her in dejection, that required all the influence of her pious resignation to subdue.

The observations of sister Lucella upon these frequent interviews, and their saddening effect upon both parties, led her to the belief, which in confidence she communicated to Alvina, "that their lady abbess had certainly been the *cortéjo* of Don Ferdinand; a lady, by whom, as fame reported, he had been used ill; and who, in a sudden visitation of repent-

ance, had retired to a convent; where, as rumour proclaimed, she strove by inflictions of the most severe description, to expiate having ever suffered her heart to imbibe a serious attachment for any man but her husband."

These conjectures at once accounted for the deep dejection and piteous penances which their lady abbess most steadily inflicted upon herself, particularly after those distressing interviews with Don Ferdinand. But they were by no means welcome to the pure heart of Alvina; for though as innocent as unsophisticated youth should ever be, her mind revolted from any species of attachment that could require penances to expiate; and many a pang it added to those griefs her heart was full of, to think her beloved abbess could ever have acted so as not wholly to merit that love and veneration which her heart so warmly cherished for her.

The visits of Don Ferdinand were not more replete with cordial comfort to his niece, than to the sorrow-stricken abbess; for although

the fascinations of Alvina had won so much upon the haughty and misanthropic Ferdinand, as to permit her to interest and attach him more than any thing now out of the pale of bigotry, she was doomed to experience great affliction from his agreeing most decidedly with his stern confessor, Father Sancho, in the determination of devoting her to the monastic vows.

But inimical to this determination were the religious principles so deeply implanted in her mind, whilst in England, by the unfortunate Xavier and his preceptor, a divine of exemplary life and doctrines; and, to subvert them, became the settled purpose of Don Ferdinand. Against this determination, the gentle abbess remonstrated; affirming, "that the tenets of the Protestant faith had been so deeply inculcated in the heart of Alvina, that any attempt to tamper with them could produce no other effect than disappointment to him, and misery to the object of his persecution;" a remonstrance which, unfortunately, so incensed Don Ferdinand, that it induced

his bringing forward an inveterate auxiliary in his cruel project, Father Sancho, his own stern confessor.

But all the denunciations of Father Sancho against the heretical obstinacy of Alvina, failed in shaking her firmness. The precepts of Xavier and his preceptor she cherished as the prop of her own eternal welfare; and she, who was mild and docile as feminine softness could make her, where sacred or moral principle was not concerned, braved even the terrors of the Supreme Council, in preservation of her faith: but, when at length lured by the wiles of bigotry into firm conviction that the life of Xavier was only to be preserved through her abjuration of that religion which Xavier had taught her, and that, in bitter agony of soul, she acceded to this hated apostacy, the confederate bigots found their merciless project but half accomplished, by the victim of their incessant persecution holding out firmly against the conventual vow; when Don Ferdinand, in erring zeal for expiation of family offences, and Father Sancho, from

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wounded arrogance, wincing at being foiled in a project by a puling baby, imprisoned her in the dungeons of Santa Barbara, with the alternative of either submitting, at the expiration of a specified period, to his wish for her holy vocation; or of having her dungeon exchanged for one within the precincts of the Inquisition.

No sooner had Don Ferdinand adopted this cruel measure than compunction subdued him, and he became seriously indisposed; when Father Sancho, left to his own exploits of defacing the mild and lovely aspect of religion, by the deformities of a spurious substitute, brought down the furious threats of the Supreme Council* upon the abbess of Santa Barbara, for having dared to take upon herself the liberation of the lovely young prisoner, whom he again had confined; which so affected the abbess, that she also fell ill; but notwithstanding, contrived, through the agency of the amiable Father Felipe,† to have information

* Inquisition of Madrid.

† One of the fathers of her order.

conveyed to Xavier, in England, of the imprisonment of the persecuted Alvina.

The afflicting result of the interference of the unfortunate Xavier Almedina we must reserve for a more appropriate part of our narrative; at present we have only to say, in allusion to it, that the sorrowing Alvina felt her liberation too dearly purchased by a compromise that stipulated for an eternal separation from Xavier, the consecrated idol of her grateful heart; and, had she not felt soothing hopes, from the increasing influence she was daily acquiring over the mind of her uncle, of being able, in time, to win him into withdrawing that direful interdict which erased happiness from her life's prospects, she must have sunk beneath the miseries that oppressed her.

But the hopes which Alvina fondly cherished, through her increasing favour with her uncle, were at length fatally blighted by the destruction of his quinta; when Don Ferdinand, influenced by the advice of Father Sancho, not to draw upon himself the vindictive wrath

of the banditti, gave up all thoughts of rebuilding his beautiful quinta; and, thus chased from the neighbourhood of Santa Barbara, Alvina lost for a time all opportunity of profiting by the partiality which had been daily strengthening in the mind of her uncle, as the beauties of her artless mind expanded to his delighted view.

Our readers already know that the chief of this banditti was named Ramirez; a miscreant, who had been led by his talents and his crimes, through various adventures, into seeking shelter in France; where, in some conscription, he got enrolled in the army of that country, and in which he contrived to signalize himself as an intrepid warrior. But his evil propensities, ever in action, tempted him to the practice of unfair advantages at the gaming table, which ultimately led to his disgraceful dismission from the service.

But the active demons, who presided over the destiny of Ramirez, left him not long without promising speculations for future mischief. In the calculations of Ramirez, Europe

was for ever to remain the bleeding sport of ambition and consequent warfare; it therefore entered into his diabolical imagination to embody a troop, to be augmented at pleasure, for the pillage of regimental baggage traversing the lonely mountain tracks, and of the warriors slain in the field of glory.

Of all the extensive speculations Ramirez had in view, it is, however, sufficient for our narrative, to mention *that* particularly which led his band, by hovering near the French in their pillaging track, to insure themselves, through the valour of the victorious allies, unlimited scope for their depredations.

In the prosecution of this sacrilegious course, the banditti had acquired so much wealth, that it was absolutely necessary to obtain a place of strength for their treasure, and for their own retreat. Near to the site of Don Ferdinand's quinta were the remains of a Moorish fortress, in tolerably good preservation, possessing subterraneous cells and other fastnesses, exactly suited to their purposes; and those, to whom the destruction of the quinta, and the banish-

ment of its owner was important, led Ramirez on to its ruthless conflagration.

The deadly and diabolical enmity of Ramirez to Don Ferdinand de Verodia, had been engendered and nurtured many a year before the birth of Lady Alvina; whose residence in the monastery of Santa Barbara was no secret to him, when he took up his abode in the Moorish fortress; where he soon formed his project of tearing this lovely blossom of a tree he hated, from her sacred sanctuary, and placing it in the bosom of one of the most ferocious of his *companeros.*

But scarcely had this miscreant chief formed this horrible design, when Don Ferdinand, unhappy whilst not exerting every effort to subdue the contumacy of his niece against becoming that expiating sacrifice he wished, sent for Alvina to join him at Madrid; where she had not long remained — making more obvious advances in her own project of disarming his persecuting spirit, than he performed in his speculations relative to her sacred vocation — when the approaching counter-

revolution in the capital induced his sending her back to what he conceived would prove a more secure asylum, Santa Barbara; but whence, most promptly, the terrified lady abbess, at the suggestion of Father Felipe, sent her with fear and trembling to the care of her respected nurse, Marcella Peralta, whose sequestered *cortijo* the reverend father pronounced secure from the possible detection of the invaders of their country's peace; a moving brigade of which was momentarily expected to perform their march like the destructive leming, through their haplessly devoted neighbourhood.

CHAPTER IV.

Although Lady Alvina thus providentially escaped the dire horrors which visited Santa Barbara, she but narrowly avoided those Ramirez had designed for her; and though from these Fauconberg was ordained to prove the instrument, the mercy of Heaven had decreed that her escape should have derived its source from the resistless influence of genuine gratitude.

One only child had sprung from the marriage of Gasper Peralta and Marcella; Lopez, whose prematurely ripening genius had filled the hearts of his exulting parents with the most flattering hopes for his future prosperity.

Next to riches, there was nothing in existence so highly prized by Gasper as his Lopez; and next to obtaining treasures for himself, his highest gratification was providing for the comfort and advantages of his child.

Marcella could, with a fair effort of ingenuity, trace her origin to hidalgo source. This achievement was quite sufficient to engender a large portion of ambition, with an almost religious veneration for honourable pursuits, within her bosom; and notwithstanding she had permitted all-subduing love to allure her from hidalgo elevation, to wed beneath her rank, for many years after her marriage she had delusively believed her husband's soul would have adorned nobility; and although, with pain and grief unutterable, she at length discovered that the immaterial portion of Gasper's composition was not so purely noble as she had romantically imagined, she had yet determined that Nature having stamped the soul of Lopez sterling, he should perform such actions through his life as the purest honour and integrity only should inspire.

Nothing could have induced this *grandee* of Spain to submit to the degradation of superintending the nursery establishment of Lady Alvina, but the hope of advantage to her boy,

which was shortly realized; for Don Ferdinand, pleased with the deportment and acuteness of the youth, appointed him his page; accompanied by a promise of promoting him to the station of his private secretary, upon the expected demise of the then holder of that employment.

But, unfortunately for Lopez Peralta, his was a disposition that could not withstand temptation. In his composition were many inestimable qualities; but, haplessly, they had each their counterpoise: even his brilliant genius had its clouded attendant in an erring judgment; and the flexibility of his purposes wore an aspect of dangerous menace.

In one of Don Ferdinand's excursions from his quinta to Madrid, Lopez, on visiting a theatre, became so fascinated by a beautiful *bolerista*,* that only consulting the impulse of his infatuated admiration, he took French leave of his sombre master, and joined the theatrical company to which his fascinator was attached.

* A female bolero dancer.

Lopez took nothing of his master's property with him, but the wrath of Don Ferdinand was inexorable; yet not more so than that of the truant's parents. Gasper's hopes for his son's provision, without further expense to him, were by this fatal stroke utterly destroyed; and his violence, in resentment, could not be appeased; whilst her son, degrading himself into a stage-player—one, who in the summer season was to herd with jugglers and rope-dancers, so sorely wounded the hidalgo pride of Marcella, that she could not be comforted, nor her indignation soothed; until her lovely young charge undertook the cause of Lopez, and, by working upon Marcella's maternal apprehensions, through the increasing evils which must overwhelm him if he were not forgiven, and some mild course adopted to withdraw him from his dissipated associates, at length led the subdued mother to write to her transgressing son, and appointed an interview; in which she folded him to her bursting heart, and promised to become his advocate with his father.

The benevolent Alvina did not pause here; for she exerted all her gentle influence over the mind of her uncle, to save a fellow-being from destruction, by recalling him to the path of estimable association; and Don Ferdinand, softened by her persuasive pleadings, would have placed Lopez, though no longer in his own family, in a safe and advantageous situation, had not the inflexible Father Sancho interposed with an austerity tha would yield no mercy, without the purchase of the penitential flagellations of months or years.

But, ere Marcella had time allowed her for working upon the obdurate feelings of her husband for the pardon of their son, that son, not recalled home by the saving hand of parental care, departed with his profligate *camaradas* from Madrid, upon their summer excursion; and just at the critical period when Gasper, at a newly opened *neveria*,* most unexpectedly encountered in the master of it, one of the companions of his miraculous escape from shipwreck; who, immediately

* Where refreshments are sold.

recognising Gasper Peralta, put some questions to him that were not welcome to his ear.

Gasper, however, made up some kind of equivocal answer, which seemed satisfactory to the companion of his peril; but, not being gifted with the same effect in self-satisfaction, Gasper returned to his home, terror-stricken; the worm that never dies, which had seemed lulled by years of suspended animation, now awoke to action, to prey fatally upon his vitals; and, without power to summon Lopez to receive the dying benediction of his father, the life of Gasper came to its termination.

But how, for the honest and romantically honourable Marcella, did that sad scene terminate? By the dying confession of her husband, imparting to her alone, that which, through tenderness to his memory, and the preservation of family fame, she consigned to interment within her own faithful bosom, and which converted her into a culprit, who sinned on, even whilst writhing with the never-ceasing anguish of remorse.

From the hour of that confession, the visible

indications of a breaking heart appeared in the aspect of Marcella. She retired at once to that solitary dwelling where Fauconberg had discovered her; and there, without companion to disturb her avocations — for the peasants whom she employed to work upon her farm dwelt in their own cabins — she made those secret arrangements inspired by her conjugal affection.

Lopez Peralta, ardent in his feelings, and impetuous in the accomplishment of his determinations, felt so keenly wounded by his mother's not having instantly won upon his father to recal him to his paternal roof, that he not only quitted Madrid, without giving her notice of his intention, but allowed no clew of his route to remain for her to trace him by; so that no channel was left for communicating to him the death of his father; nor her removal to the *cortijo*, in the valley of Santa Barbara, presented to her, immediately upon the demise of her husband, by Don Ferdinand de Verodia, in recompense for her faithful care of Lady Alvina. It was, therefore, accidentally that

the intelligence of his father's death reached the ear of Lopez, who, in agonies of filial sorrow, winged his way to Madrid; but there he found not the widowed parent, whom he had flown thither to console: when, in painful anxiety, he presented himself at the door of Don Ferdinand, where, by a previous order awaiting him from Father Sancho, he was contumeliously turned from the house, without the information relative to his mother, which his bursting heart panted to receive.

In this moment of despair and irritation, Lopez Peralta encountered Ramirez at the *posada* where he lodged, in Madrid; when the wary miscreant, having marked him as a tower of promised strength for his band, had commenced the artful operation of winning civilities, — and the ingenuous Lopez, not having imbibed any suspicion of the integrity of his character, received his friendly kindness with all the gratitude which the absence of it in others had naturally awakened; so that, thus encouraged and led on, Lopez, in the fulness of his heart, and candour of his disposition,

laid open all the secrets of his isolations to the arch-fiend, who lured him on to join his horde, under the specious aspect of laudable retaliation — merely pillaging, in their turn, the rapacious invaders of their bleeding country.

But when at length poor Lopez joined the troop, and found it a regularly organized banditti, his dismay could only be equalled by his bitter grief; but, bound by the most solemn oaths of fidelity and adherence, the task was no easy one to break from his yoke, though it galled him sensibly.

It had only been a very short period prior to the French army commencing its devastating course through the neighbourhood of Santa Barbara, that Lopez Peralta had joined the banditti, wholly unknowing that his heart-broken mother's residence was so near; neither was he aware that the monastery which contained his mother's nursling, and his own benevolent advocate, was in the vicinity of the fortress which he was to inhabit.

At length, one day, whilst performing in a troop of pilgrims at the monastery, Lopez,

with grief and shame, beheld the angelic being who had pleaded his cause so benevolently, though, alas! so unavailingly; and now, with more horror than he had even before considered the dreadful profession he had been entrapped into, he determined resolutely to break from it the very first possible opportunity, even though his death might prove the penalty.

As Lopez wound down the descent from the charitable community of Santa Barbara, he allowed his impostor *companeros* to advance before him; for, lost in pensive musing, his footsteps assimilated with his cogitation; and time, place, and associates, all were forgotten in his earnest meditation upon how he could obtain intelligence of his mother from Lady Alvina, without betraying to her with whom he had come into the neighbourhood of Santa Barbara; when, thus absorbed in rumination, he passed the defile leading to the fortress unheeded, and providentially entered that which led to the romantically situated *cortijo* of his mother.

The babbling streamlets, which rushed in such

impetuous tumult from the mountains in this sequestered spot, allowed not of any warning from the sound of advancing footsteps; and Lopez, in amazement, beheld his mother, undisturbed by the approach of a stranger, with a pitcher collecting water from one of these gurgling rills.

But Marcella, with thoughts scarcely spared to her employment from the misery which, in anguished shame, now bent her eyes almost habitually to the ground, perceived not the pretended pilgrim, who recoiled in horror, whilst his heart yearned for recognition; and as he panted to sink at her feet and implore her blessing, he shrunk from inflicting that dire shock which interrogation must occasion.

From the ambush of a luxuriant ilex thicket, Lopez, with eyes streaming like the mountain rills, and with heart and hands raised up invoking Heaven to bless and protect her, and to pardon him, observed his mother as long as she remained in view.

With trembling apprehension he noted that she was but the meagre shadow of her former

self; that dejection marked her every movement, and that melancholy, almost amounting to despair, sat legibly depicted upon her fine countenance. He saw that her clothing betrayed no poverty, that her habitation looked respectable, and that if any thing so desolate could speak comfort, it was a commodious dwelling: but during the period which catching water and feeding domestic poultry detained her in his anxious view, as no one thing occurred to demonstrate there being any other individual belonging to the premises, his wonder became infinite on finding her thus a solitary occupant of a spot which seemed well calculated for his revealing himself; and where, by continuing with her as the companion of her sequestration, he could convince her that the earnest wish of his heart was to obliterate from her memory every cause he had ever given her for uneasiness.

But to acknowledge himself to his mother as a member of banditti, would be at once to plunge a poniard into her too apparently breaking heart; and to withdraw from his

associates, and remain in their neighbourhood, would be utterly impossible. He, therefore, at length, though with a reluctant spirit, withdrew unobserved, determined to develop all the apparent singularities of his mother's present situation, without delay to form some judicious plan for effectually breaking from the banditti, and to lure his mother from that dangerous neighbourhood.

In vain, through many a sorrowful day, did poor Lopez seek means for obtaining the intelligence he panted for relative to his mother; for, independently of the immediate neighbourhood being so destitute of inhabitants, he trembled at making inquiries, lest they might awaken suspicion of the melancholy recluse being connected with the inquirer, or lead her lonely habitation to the perilous observation of the rapacious brigands.

But of this latter apprehension not being realized, even without his aid, he could cherish little hope; and that very apprehension led him on, from day to day, still to remain with the horde to watch over the safety of his

solitary mother; fully determined, should he find her *cortijo* discovered, and that any hostility against it should be in meditation, at once to acknowledge to Ramirez his consanguinity to the recluse, and claim protection for her.

Soon the alarms of Lopez for the safety of his mother were fearfully augmented. The invading army was rapidly advancing to that very point, near to which it had been some time hovering; and with horror and dismay he discovered that Lady Alvina had become the companion of his defenceless mother. In his anxious observation of his parent he had developed, that she had derived all her provisions, save what her own little farm supplied, from the buttery of Santa Barbara; that sometimes she had herself gone for this supply, and sometimes persons from the monastery were the bearers. But as the formidable foe drew near, the communication became fearful, could scarcely be attempted, was at length terminated, and the source destroyed.

In this moment of peril and despair, the banditti themselves hiding in all their secret haunts from the ravaging enemy, Lopez Peralta stood forth each night, unknown to the unconscious tremblers within his mother's dwelling, their armed, intrepid, and devoted sentinel; and at dawn of morning left upon the bench in the *casapuérta* the provisions he had marauded for them, or brought from his own portion of the now scantily supplied stores of the fortress. But during all that time of agonizing protection he concealed himself from the view of those he guarded, as sedulously as he hoped and prayed they might remain from the discovery of all who might injure them; for he scarcely knew which he recoiled from most, being revealed to, as a consociate of banditti, her who had given him birth, or her who had restored to him the blessing of his mother's forgiveness; that perfect being who, showing him "virtue in its own form of loveliness," had led him in horror from the seductive allurements of vice, and would have led

him on even to love herself, could he have dared to elevate his adoration to a height so unattainable.

But at length the veil of concealment was removed; for that discovery of his mother's dwelling, he with fear and trembling anticipated, was made by the diabolical Ramirez himself, in his cautious windings to avoid the reconnoitring parties of the enemy. In the discovery of this sequestered dwelling was included that of its lovely young inmate, when, ever prompt in the imagination of iniquity, Ramirez determined the now defenceless Alvina should be borne off to the fortress, the moment an expected engagement between the allies and the invader should drive the French from that part of the province.

This alarming discovery and diabolical plot soon became most providentially known to Lopez, who flew on the fleet wings of active gratitude to the nearest inhabited town, where obtaining a trusty messenger, he despatched him under safe escort to the banker of Don Ferdinand de Verodia in Madrid, with infor-

mation of the peril impending over Lady Alvina.

This messenger despatched, Lopez proceeded to purchase male attire for Lady Alvina to escape in, should she be compelled to flight for safety; and as he knew there was no probability of the dire project being attempted before the French army was chased from their vicinity, he purposed not to alarm unnecessarily the inhabitants of the defenceless *cortijo* by this new species of alarm; but still, however, trembling for Lady Alvina's safety, the very night after his provident purchase, he, when performing sentinel, deposited the dress of the peasant boy in the *casapuerta*, with a note written in feigned characters, importing, "that disguise having been sent from a neighbouring community, in case the existing unhappy state of the province should render it expedient to facilitate the escape of the young and lovely in search of refuge."

CHAPTER V.

THE expected engagement of the armies at length commenced, when Lopez, in dismay at the interdict to the demoniac project of Ramirez being in certain progress for removal, fled from the ambush of his abhorred associates, then hovering like a flight of vultures near the field of carnage, and made his rapid way to the friary of the order of Santa Barbara, in the anxious hope of finding Father Felipe, or some other of the surviving monks, visiting the still loved walls of their dilapidated monastery, from whom to seek protection for Lady Alvina.

But disappointed in this hope, despair inspired Lopez with courage to present himself at the gate of the sisters of the same order. The lady abbess of this monastery, Lopez felt assured, was a Christian of a different mould from Father Sancho, since she had

borne a share in rearing Lady Alvina; and at all events, there was no alternative for saving his lovely advocate from destruction. Without hesitation, therefore, he announced himself at the gate "as the son of Marcella Peralta, bearing intelligence that nearly concerned Lady Alvina." His name and business proved immediate passports to the presence of the abbess; his dress presenting no cause for alarm, as the banditti of Ramirez did not perpetrate their pillage of the field of battle in the wild costume which unequivocally marked their profession, but in a sort of fantastic commingling of the *guerilla* and the peasant.

The unfortunate abbess and her surviving associates were at this moment not many hours liberated from their place of fearful refuge, through the evacuation of their monastery; and of the total defeat and consequent flight of the enemy, which were in fair promise when Lopez left the field, the trembling half-famished nuns learned from him; but this intelligence, which led them to their knees in the fervent

thanksgiving of pious hearts, was dreadfully alloyed by the information of the perils pending over their beloved Alvina; perils, which this hapless abbess knew were indeed tremendous, when she learned, in almost speechless horror and dismay, that the chief of the banditti she for many a month had feared was Ramirez Escalona.

The poor famishing abbess of this so lately oppulent community, now bereft of every mortal source, had no assistance to yield the despairing Lopez for the safety of Alvina. She would herself have attempted to conduct her to Santa Barbara, where, in the secret sanctuary she had just emerged from, she knew they might defy the power of the banditti, had she not found conviction that her exhausted frame could not support her agitated spirit, even to the base of the rock upon which her convent was erected.

At length the question from the heart-wrung abbess of, "Why he had not himself attempted the conveyance of the poor defenceless child to her protection?" drew from the

ingenuous Lopez all the distresses of his own situation, shrinking as a culprit from the recognition of his mother.

The shock conveyed to the susceptible bosom of his agitated auditress by this confession, so affectingly made, was excessive; but her comments upon his distressing communications were as kind as benevolence and piety could inspire; and she strongly advised and encouraged him to seek an immediate interview with his mother, and throw himself upon her mercy for pardon, and restoration to maternal love.

Thus encouraged by the benevolence of one, whom by inference he believed an earthly saint, Lopez prepared Marcella for an interview with him by leaving a billet that night in the *casa-puerta*, informing her he was near, and entreating a private conference with her at a specified hour, in a certain copse close by her habitation.

The anxious, fearful, yet delighted parent, true to the appointment, with a wild shriek of maternal transport, threw herself upon the

neck of her long absent child, and clasped him to her panting bosom, uttering and invoking blessings, in the most affecting forms, upon his head the moment she beheld him, and ere he had time to humble himself at her feet.

Alas! the transition! Confession was not here addressed to mercy. The recoiling horror of wounded integrity steeled the parent's breast; and the heart-anguished mother, as she writhed in maternal agony, as she combated with convulsive energy against maternal tenderness, commanded him from her sight for ever; and even vain became the efforts Lopez made for awaking her alarms for the safety of her nursling, as incentives for endurance of his presence; for with bitter disdain she rejected the dishonour of such protection for Lady Alvina, and still more peremptorily commanded the penitential culprit to be gone for ever.

With a heart almost bursting in its anguish, at this afflicting transition in his beloved mother's conduct, Lopez, with lingering steps, obeyed the stern mandate; and whilst yet he

hoped the lamp of affection would, as indignation softened into maternal grief, kindle that interest and pity which might recal him, he wound his way to the detested fortress, there to ascertain what of immediate danger he had to apprehend for Lady Alvina; when, to his great relief, he learned that Ramirez had been wounded by an English officer; and his hopes, for Lady Alvina's rescue from destruction, were further strengthened by the subsequent mysterious disappearance of his diabolical chief.

The anguish which overpowered the susceptible Marcella, could neither seek nor find concealment from her nursling, who, though shocked beyond expression at such intelligence of one so dear to the heart of her affectionate and faithful nurse, to the amazement of the heart-wrung parent, she did not coincide in opinion relative to the stern harshness with which he had been treated.

Alvina had acquired her principles of Christian charity, not only from the instructions of Xavier Almedina and his preceptor, but from

evangelical record. Opinions and arguments drawn from such sources, at first amazed Marcella in their condemnation of her inflexibility, but at length became gratifying to that heart which Alvina melted into maternal tenderness, anxious to forgive, and to lead back her stray lamb to the fostering bosom of the merciful Shepherd.

But how or by what means to recal her poor penitent, became a perplexity too mighty for her who found herself without resources. This destitution of all aid led the desponding Marcella to betray to Lady Alvina that dire peril which menaced her, and which she had determined not to impart until she should have devised some project for her effectual escape.

It is impossible to convey any just idea of the dismay of the poor isolated Alvina on this terrific intelligence. Hour after hour Marcella had to support the swooning frame of the panic-stricken Alvina, without any medical aid for her, whom she firmly believed was about, in mercy, to be called to heaven.

But a night having passed without the

realizing of their apprehensions, the courage of Alvina seemed to renovate. Another day, without occurrence to alarm, still added to the convalescence of Alvina's firmness; and a third morning dawning without molestation, the sanguine feelings of youth led her to the flattering expectation, that through the merciful interposition of Heaven, the dire project had been abandoned. But the morning had not far advanced when two of the horde were seen by the terrified inhabitants of the *cortijo* approaching the door of their sequestered dwelling, to which they had been led in their minute investigation of every winding diverging from the main path of the glen; but who, as they advanced, were accosted by Lopez, who had pursued them thither; and who, in the tones and manners of social fraternity, which he had politically assumed, demanded their purpose there?

"To seek their mysteriously concealed chief," was their reply; when, with all the promptitude of his ready wit, Lopez led them to believe that he had anticipated them in their

meditated search, and had found the premises, not only untenanted, but completely sacked.

The fierce brigands, thus assured by their *camarada*, that neither their chief nor booty could be found within, hastened away with Lopez upon a new scent, which he affected to have just discovered.

The almost fainting tremblers within the house, although they beheld Lopez thus lead off the men who had so dreadfully alarmed them, yet, not assured but they might return and prove the dire agents of the fell project which Lopez had announced, the most overpowering terror resumed its influence in the mind of both; and Lady Alvina instantly sought shelter in the peasant's garb, fully determined to pass each night with the squirrels in some luxuriant tree, until, through the mercy of Providence, safe escort might arrive to convey her to some secure asylum.

And that hoped-for escort soon appeared. Alvina, influenced by the adventurous spirit which despair inspires, complied with the prompt advice of Marcella, and availed herself

of the protection of one of their national deliverers, as his guide.

Scarcely had the trembling Alvina, in her picturesque disguise, emerged with her brave companion from the defile which wound from the *cortijo* into the main path of the valley of Santa Barbara, ere she was descried by Lopez, in his descent from a lofty eminence, after having most judiciously mazed his ferocious *companeros* in the perplexities of this wild scenery of capricious nature.

Lopez could scarcely have wished for a more secure protector for his lovely advocate than a British officer—such was their honourable fame—had the *protégée* confided to his care been any other than Lady Alvina; but anxious gratitude had converted Lopez into a very coward for her safety, and filled his bosom with suspicions of all mankind. Warily, therefore, did he trace their footsteps to the pilgrims' pass at Santa Barbara's, for the double purpose of proving the faith of her protector, and to aid in her defence, should any foemen of the valley appear to intercept their way.

Lopez anxiously watched below for the appearance of their shadows through the spiracles in the parapet, as they ascended; and the sounding of the bells in accurate measure to their advance, assuring him that Lady Alvina's escape had been happily effected, he, with a heart full of gratitude to Heaven for its mercy, and to British benevolence for this essential service, bent his wary way homeward, pondering as he went upon how he should proceed in providing for his mother's safety; for now that of Lady Alvina was so far secured, it for the first time struck his dismayed conception, that the vengeance of the disappointed Ramirez would doubtlessly fall upon his defenceless mother, when the absence of Lady Alvina from the *cortijo* should be discovered.

In the lingering of his painful musing this attached, though erring son, caught a view of the metamorphosed Fauconberg descending from the monastery. The noble mien and agitated movement of the pretended pilgrim

first attracted, and then riveted the attention of Lopez; and soon the appendage of the dog, Carlo, which he had noted as he had followed in the wake of the fugitives to Santa Barbara, confirmed his surmises beyond all doubt; and led to that characteristic thoughtlessness in the alarming manner of his accosting Fauconberg, which, with one less humanely cautious, might have cost him the penalty of his life.

The strikingly fine exterior of Fauconberg filled the mind of one so tinctured with romance as Lopez, with various forms of possibilities likely to arise from the protection afforded to this lovely child of perfection; and, all impatience to learn if this apparently moon-dropped protector could be the senor Xavier Almedina, of whom he had heard so much, and for whose safety she had abjured the religious worship her heart clung to, he determined, without delay, to brave once more the indignation of his mother; assured, that the intelligence he had to communicate

of Lady Alvina's safe arrival at Santa Barbara's, would obtain for him one moment's hearing.

But this interview with Marcella proved of a widely different description to what her son had anticipated; and from his now tenderly forgiving parent Lopez learned, "that to Lady Alvina he was indebted once more for the restoration of that maternal tenderness for which his heart panted." But nothing which he had power to paint of horrors, to alarm Marcella from her present perilous residence, could induce her consent to quit it: no, not even to effect the means of liberating her child from his dire enthralment, and promoting his power to solace and protect her; for, unknown to Lopez, and even now unconfided to this idol of her earthly affections, a heart-rending vow, prompted by what she conceived imperative duty, bound her for life to that lonely and defenceless habitation.

Full of painful and perplexing amazement, Lopez at length quitted his mother; and after the horde had set out on various projects,

which he knew left him little apprehension of encountering any of them on his way, he hastened to Santa Barbara; where, admitted to the presence of the lady abbess and Alvina, he presented his petition for a line from the latter, to subdue the contumacy of his mother in her rash adherence to a dwelling so beset with peril.

With all the sweetness of her nature, and in all the anxiety of her affection for her faithful nurse, Alvina addressed Marcella upon the subject; and subjoined to her fervent entreaties upon the subject, the earnest desire of the abbess for her immediately repairing to Santa Barbara, there to partake of whatsoever of security was now afforded by the desolated monastery.

The messenger of Lopez proving faithful, and some auspicious facilities attending his route, Don Ferdinand received the account of the peril menacing Alvina much sooner than Lopez could have anticipated, and lost not one unnecessary moment in flying to Santa Barbara.

The situation of the abbess, as superior of the community, presenting its interdict to the possibility of her accompanying Alvina from Santa Barbara, from whence prudence commanded an immediate flight for the latter, Don Ferdinand set out on his anxious attempt to bear his ward from the vicinity of Ramirez. With a heart grieved for the desolation he had been compelled to leave the abbess encompassed by, and a head full of alarm, lest the romance attendant upon Alvina's introduction to her escort from Marcella's *cortijo* should militate against that project for her conventual profession he had at heart, he was in no disposition to hail, with even the semblance of gratitude, the incident which sent the formidable object of this new alarm to bear so impressive a part in rescuing them from the perils of their way; and though he mentally determined to seek out some method to evince his sensibility of obligation to their gallant deliverer, he could not resist the impulse of telling Fauconberg, that there all personal intercourse between the preserver and preserved,

must terminate. A determination against further acquaintance, which was but the more confirmed; when, on their encounter with Marchmont in the *posada*, Alvina, whose delicacy was the most sensitive Don Ferdinand had ever observed in any female, had been impelled by her grateful interest for her preserver, to accost with so much intrepidity an utter stranger.

Lady Alvina had not now been long established with her guardian at Madrid, in full security from the vile projects of the diabolical Ramirez, when intelligence was brought by Guzman — the domestic who had attended them on their perilous flight through the valley of Santa Barbara — that, on his return from visiting his friends at some distance from Madrid, he had seen the British officer who had so gallantly rescued them from the bandit; and upon whose arm he had beheld familiarly leaning, and in the uniform of the same corps, Don Xavier Almedina.

This intelligence was immediately conveyed to Father Sancho by the dismayed Don Ferdi-

nand, who had permitted that austere priest to regulate all his decisions, until he seemed no longer to possess power over his own actions; and the result was, the reverend father's determination to lose no more time in compelling the contumacious Alvina to bend to their decree. Their poor devoted victim was now informed, she was to be borne from Madrid to the Indian shores; and no more time was allowed her for preparation than permitted her to write farewell letters to her beloved abbess of Santa Barbara, and Marcella Peralta, and her billets of adieu to Fauconberg.

CHAPTER VI.

The rescue of the brave Fauconberg and his intrepid friends from Ramirez and his horde, with the escape of the captive soldiers from the fortress, so dismayed the banditti, in anticipation of vengeance from the formidable British army, that the moment Ramirez was equal to a removal, they quitted the neighbourhood of Santa Barbara. And besides this motive for change of quarters, the successes of the British were daily removing the scenes for their sacrilegious depredations further and further from the spot which they had marked out for their principal fastness; which they, calculating upon the tardiness of Spanish manœuvres, had considered as one of much more permanent advantage.

No suspicion having fallen upon the faith of Lopez Peralta, who had veiled his abhorrence of the association he had been lured into,

under the guise of thoughtlessness and buffoonery, he pronounced it judicious to temporize with them a little longer for his mother's sake, and await an auspicious moment for withdrawing from the sanguinary band.

That propitious moment at length arrived. It was the established policy of Ramirez to evade the suspicion of observers by having his troop appear in the dress of guerillas, whilst hovering near the field of battle. But merely to hover, in no one point according with the better feelings of Lopez Peralta, he took a voluntary station amid the genuine guerillas at the battle of Vittoria, as an active foe to the invaders of his country; where, with the impetuosity of his nature, he heedlessly rushed within the range of the French artillery; but, when aware of his temerity, and endeavouring to rejoin his party, a file of the enemy fell upon him; when Albert Fauconberg, then leading on a detachment, rescued the life of Lopez from this peril, as he passed; wholly unconscious that in this rash guerilla was to be identified the very brigand to whom he

owed the debt he now repaid. But, in his gallant preserver, Lopez recognised the hero of the valley.

Lopez having been wounded, ere the interposition of Fauconberg had rescued him from impending death, was, as a guerilla, taken care of by the humanity of the victors; and the banditti having pushed on after the armies, Lopez was enabled, upon dismissal from the hospital, to carry into effect his long meditated plan of desertion from the troop of Ramirez, and without molestation reached the *cortijo* of his mother; where, upon finding his beloved parent dejected in mind, and feeble in frame, he determined to give up his now favourite project of joining the army as a regular soldier; and by remaining with his drooping mother, and evincing every dutiful attention, to remove, if possible, those alarming symptoms which his upbraiding heart without hesitation placed to his own account.

The flight of the French invaders, and of the nearly as formidable banditti, from the neighbourhood of the valley of Santa Barbara, had

induced the terror-chased inhabitants to return to their long deserted homes; so that Marcella had now the advantage of *jornaleros** to work upon her farm, and every facility of procuring provisions was again restored to her; yet, her anxious son, with surprise and regret, found her without the comfort and protection of a resident domestic.

Lopez Peralta, now attired as a farmer of the province, felt no apprehension of being recognised by any of the few neighbours who had hovered near their invaded habitation, as they had constantly fled to their places of concealment on the appearance of a brigand. He often, therefore, presented himself at the gate of Santa Barbara, to inquire if yet there was intelligence of Lady Alvina? and to execute commissions for the abbess, and her augmented community; her diocesan having sent to Santa Barbara a few of those nuns who had been chased from other convents of the same order, in his diocese. At length, however, in one of his often repeated visits, Lopez

* Day-labourers.

learned that intelligence had arrived from Senora Marta — the gouvernante who had succeeded Marcella in the care of Lady Alvina — stating information having arrived respecting her beloved pupil; intelligence that had deeply affected the abbess of Santa Barbara, and almost immediately subdued her to a bed of sickness.

Lopez soon perceived, with filial sorrow, that this intelligence from Senora Marta bore heavily also upon the mind of his drooping mother; more heavily than he could have expected, even though aware of her tender attachment to her lovely nurseling. Her dejection became piteous; whilst, to the apprehensions of Lopez, she seemed to talk incoherently, by repeatedly uttering self-upbraidings for permitting the unjustifiable cruelties of Father Sancho, in his persecution of Lady Alvina. But at length, to his utter dismay, Lopez discovered, through filial tenderness in occasionally keeping vigil at his mother's chamber-door to learn if she reposed, that her bed was untenanted for hours each

night, and that at morning's dawn she emerged, as it appeared, from the bowels of the earth, in one of her cellars, where even his ingenuity could discover no retreat.

This dismay almost amounted to distraction in poor Lopez, through a torturing suspicion being thus conveyed, that his mother was engaged in occult mysteries which shunned the light; or had been the perpetrator of crimes which imposed such direful penance as this implied; and his agonized heart, not long enduring the torture of a suspense so painful, he, with all the respect which strong affection and veneration could inspire, confessed the discovery he had made, and conjured her, in the most touching language of persuasion, to admit him to her confidence.

Marcella listened to her child like one whose heartstrings were rending as he spoke, — like one for whom the world contained no ray of consolation: but her expressive look portrayed the most tender commiseration, as she pronounced an affecting negative to his importunities.

From this afflicting hour, Lopez perceived his mother's life was drawing towards its termination. To gratify her affectionate child, Marcella permitted him to summon medical advice; but the Sangrado of that neighbourhood gave no hope to cheer the filial heart of Lopez, — and vain, as proved his importunities for confidence, were now the gentle entreaties of this anxious son, for permission to summon Father Felipe, to yield to his dying parent spiritual consolation.

Father Felipe was the only one of the monks of Santa Barbara who had escaped the general massacre of his order by the merciless invaders. He had been now appointed, by his diocesan, confessor and chaplain to the remnant of the late numerous sisterhood of Santa Barbara, and inhabited a solitary cell in the almost totally dilapidated Friary which had belonged to his cruelly slaughtered community.

"No, my son," was the afflicting reply of the dying parent to her sorrowing child — "for me are not decreed those mental consolations a pious Catholic might dare to hope for. The

bitter task assigned to me allows of no confession: it is my imperative duty, Lopez, to die in silence."

As the subsequent day was drawing to a close, Lopez was surprised by his mother's request to convey, without delay, for her a sealed paper to Father Felipe. Lopez, conceiving this mission of a sacred nature, and trusting it might lead to the holy father's attendance upon her last moments, set out in prompt obedience to her wishes;-but, ere he turned an angle which was to conceal from his view the sad abode of expected death, he paused to take a look — a sorrowful desponding look, at a dwelling which too probably might contain no living parent to bless and greet him on his desolate return: and while he thus lingered, he suddenly beheld the light in his mother's chamber, from being stationary, commence a slow unequal movement. Fearing that she wanted *argoz** from a table, he fancied he must have inadvertently removed from her reach; and trembling lest the exer-

* Grape-water.

tion might subdue her, and, in consequence, a funeral pile be lighted by her *candil*,* he darted towards the house, — yet, before he reached it, he perceived the light had, in the faltering measure of the dying bearer, descended to the ground floor, and then had disappeared; from which he entertained little doubt, that this exertion of expiring nature was made to effect a last visit to her mysterious attraction.

Lopez reached the dwelling just in time for the glimmering of the retreating light to lead him to an unerring pursuit, which conducted him into that cellar where he had so often sought a clew to the termination of his beloved mother's nocturnal wanderings; but now that secret was disclosed. The feeble hand of the dying martyr to another's fame had no longer power to close the spring, which had concealed her way into an inner cellar.

The *candil* which she had taken from the wall in her chamber, and had now contrived to loop upon the clefts of a rudely constructed sort of altar, gave to the eye of filial tenderness

* A kind of lamp hooked up to the wall.

a full view of the miserable spot where his mother had sunk upon her trembling knees, to breathe her last pious aspiration.

On the moment the agitated Lopez entered, the affecting pathos of his exclamations recalled Marcella from the pious invocation she was commencing, as the last requiem she felt she should ever have power to utter, for the repose of a transgressor's soul, and supplication to the saints she worshipped, for their mediation, if her judgment erred in the line it had prescribed for her as that of arbitrary duty.

Marcella's hands were clasped, and held up in pious supplication; but her dimming eyes turned at the well-known voice, and rested wistfully upon Lopez, who, as he sprang to catch her sinking form in his expanding arms, received those hands around his neck, in their feeble effort of a last embrace.

"*Ah! hijo mio!* My blessing is yours,"—she with difficulty articulated. "Here, my Lopez, lies buried that which rent your mother's heart. As you prize my last blessing, part me not from it in death. Here, my son—"

Marcella's power of utterance at this moment terminated; and, although she made every effort to signify, by signs, her wish to be interred in the spot she at that moment occupied, she expired without making this wish intelligible to her weeping child; into whose imagination it never entered, that his pious mother could have formed the horrible idea of arranging for her final resting-place in unhallowed ground; he concluded, therefore, her purpose was to have whatsoever was buried in that spot removed to her sepulchre.

The affectionate son of Marcella, who had no consoler — no sympathizer in that moment of piercing affliction, which was bitterly augmented by the necessity of becoming the bearer of the inanimate form, which, for many a year, had been warmed with maternal tenderness for him, to that bed which she had so unfortunately deserted: but at length having deposited the remains of his lamented parent in her chamber, — Lopez first summoning, from a neighbouring cottage, the female who sometimes had assisted Marcella in her domestic employments,

to perform the last sad duties for her late kind *tia**, flew for Father Felipe, to pray for the soul of the departed.

The paper, which Marcella had commissioned her son to deliver to Father Felipe, proved to be an entreaty to the reverend priest, the moment that address should reach his hand, to accompany her poor child to the *cortijo*, and yield him every spiritual consolation, for all the affliction which might await him on his return to his desolate home.

The ambiguous terms in which this address was couched, were ascribed, by Father Felipe, to the wanderings of reason in receding life; but Lopez attached a widely different meaning to them:—he felt convinced, his mother's hope and expectation were, that she should expire where she actually had breathed her last; and that, on her son finding her a corse there, would of course investigate the mysteries of the place, which, being of an afflicting nature, would require the balms of spiritual consolation. But this solution was also erroneous. Mar-

* Mistress.

cella had hoped to effect an undiscoverable cemetery with her secret deposit; and, therefore, that the mystery attendant upon her disappearance might well require the consolations which the pious father could bestow upon her afflicted child.

Father Felipe performed, for the deceased, all that the solemn rites of the Catholic faith required; but Lopez did not feel himself authorized to disclose those circumstances attending his mother's final scene, which might lead the reverend monk into a participation with him in knowledge of that mystery, which the dear departed had deprived herself of such precious spiritual balms, for the purpose of concealing.

It was, therefore, when the pious monk had retired to his cell for the night, and the female to her own dwelling, that Lopez repaired to the sad memorial of his mother's secret griefs, to extricate from the pile, which she had consecrated there, all that was of a nature to be considered as forming that which her implied wish had decreed to a sacred deposite;—but, strange

to say, the unskilful structure of Marcella's painful labour—borne thither from the neighbouring rocks, and piled by her own hand—had, in many places of the almost formless mass, hitched one into another so substantially, that no implement, in the possession of Lopez, could extricate from each other the fragments she had so ingenuously combined. It therefore became necessary to procure a mattock of more power than that he possessed; and believing it not impossible, but something of the requisite description might have been left by the banditti, in the hurry of their decampment, Lopez wound his lonely way to the deserted fortress, at *siesta* hour the following day.

CHAPTER VII.

According to expectation, Lopez found the implement he sought; but not according to expectation did he find the fortress uninhabited, — for, as he was retracing his hasty footsteps from the place which had been the armory of the horde, he was electrified by the sudden closing of a door, at no great distance from him. Lopez, in full conviction of having had an observer, who was now following him for some hostile purpose, drew up into a niche behind a pillar, which supported one of the heavy masses of bulwarks with which the place abounded; and scarcely had he effected his concealment, when a flickering gleam of light appeared. The light became stronger and stronger, in evident advance, — footsteps struck on his ears; those steps soon sounded an increase in number, but not through echo. Lopez could now discern, along a passage,

up which the light had gleamed, even whilst its source had been hid by an angle of the winding way, two persons advancing, as if in earnest conference.

These persons approached, and the heart of the deserter Lopez throbbed with apprehension, amounting to dismay, on beholding, in the individual who bore the lamp, Ramirez Escalona; the companion of whom, holding his head downward, as if for the purpose of effecting a safe path in a mouldering ruin, with which he was unacquainted, presented nothing for conjecture to form surmise upon, of whom he could be, until he drew near to Lopez, to whose utter amazement, he discovered, in the *companero* of a professed chief of a banditti, the austere, inflexible professor of more than mortal sanctity — the pious Father Sancho Torquemada, of saintly fame!

"Nay, nay, but, my inestimable friend," said the man of sanctity at this moment, and in tones which struck like those of a demon upon the recoiling ears of the agitated Lopez Peralta — "although my heart, in sympathy

with yours, could suck in vengeance upon our devoted victims, like delicious nectar, yet I must in this instance be obeyed."

"Obeyed! *Por vida del diablo!*" vociferated Ramirez, in tones of vehement indignation. "This is too much. Dare you talk of expecting obedience from me! me!—who plunged your dagger into the heart of the innocent victim of your h-ll-born vengeance!—from me, who, as the assassin, bore the brunt of trial, and wore the *san benito* for your crime! *Diablo!*—Obeyed!!"

"Hist, hist," murmured out the solemn voice of Sancho, like the hollow blast of warning fate,—"you so long a *hermandad*,* and suffer the secrets of your bosom to sound even in your own ears!"

Was all this delusion, or not delusion? was the first mental question of the wondering Lopez Peralta. But, ere his amazed ideas had time to rally themselves to answer, the disputants had passed the track in which sound could be conveyed to the ear of the dismayed Lopez, whose

* A spy of the Inquisition.

first impulse was to fly: but alarm, relative to whom these devoted victims might prove, — whether Lady Alvina, or himself, might not be included in the denounced parties, led him to pause upon the possibility of learning more of this extraordinary league, by availing himself of former knowledge of the premises; and placing himself where, unheard, unseen, he could learn from their conversation the information he desired.

By the flask in the hand of Ramirez, with the direction he had emerged from, Lopez conjectured that he had been visiting the wine-cellar, preparatory to their establishing themselves in the *comedor** to take refreshment.

When this fortress had been occupied by the Moors, the apartment Ramirez selected for his *comedor* had been the donjon; surrounding which had been a secret passage, and to which sound was conveyed from within, to betray the confidential conversations of the prisoners with those who visited them. In the present state of the structure, the inclined

* Eating-room.

planes, by which these auricular agents mounted to this passage, were inaccessible, through mouldering ruins, accumulated by neglect and time; but the enterprising spirit of the most juvenile of the *camaradas* of Ramirez, Lopez Peralta, had led him to explore every part of the fortress; and, by this investigation, to discover, through a perilous succession of tottering chasms in the exterior jetties of the tower, a way to that identical passage; an achievement of his enterprise which he had not divulged to any of his *companeros*, his heart not being in unison of friendship with them. He, therefore, feared no detection from Ramirez, who could entertain no suspicion of having thus an auditor.

Nothing but the combined impulse of gratitude and self-preservation could have led the afflicted Lopez into any project to withdraw his mind from filial sorrow; but the opportunity thus afforded, for attempting the discovery of what might affect the safety of Lady Alvina, or his own, he felt ought not to be neglected—even for those sad duties which called him home.

The time which necessarily elapsed ere the perilous route of Lopez led him to his auditory concealment, had established the dire confederates most comfortably and amicably at their repast, and had led the hypocritical Sancho some way in his consultation with his ally; and soon to this secret auditor conviction was conveyed, that the austere Father Sancho, who had considered the juvenile indiscretions of Lopez Peralta too heinous for palliation, — too mighty for mercy, — was a sanguinary demon of vengeance, — the sworn patron of the diabolical Ramirez.

Sancho Torquemada had been reared in a monastery of Observantines, by an uncle, who was Prior of the community, — a man austere by nature, as well as through the peculiarly rigid forms of his order. As mortification and sanctity were the direct paths to this Prior's favour; and as, beside the extensive patronage his situation yielded to him, he possessed immense personal wealth, to bequeath to whomsoever his fancy pointed to, — no wonder, then, that mortification and sanctifi-

cation marked the manners of all his numerous satellites; amongst whom necessity had placed his nephew Sancho Torquemada.

The self-inflictions which the reverend Prior patronized, were not congenial to the mind of Sancho, who, profound in art, early learnt to veil his sins of omission and commission from his uncle's knowledge: but, at length, having transgressed more enormously than usual; and whilst trembling in alarm at the possible consequences, and wholly at a loss how to conceal, or gloss over, his misdemeanors to the rigid Prior, an extraordinary incident occurred, which yielded his transgression the aspect of saintly virtue; and no ingenuous impediment arising to induce his emerging from an appearance that was only counterfeit, he quietly submitted, without shrinking, to praise, homage and reward.

The success of this misconception enlisted the young Sancho under the banners of hypocrisy, until a passion for saintly reputation grew out of that assumption of it, which accident and interest had occasioned, — and lucky

in his deceptious course, hypocrisy, thus fatally encouraged, led him on from venal trespasses to deadly crimes. But in many instances those crimes calling for a faithful accomplice, he sought for one, and found him in Ramirez Escalona, then a minor canon of the cathedral of T., in which the saintly Sancho held a much more elevated situation.

The innately evil propensities of Ramirez led him, when believing himself in perfect security from observation, to purloin, from one of the sacred relics in the cathedral of T., a jewel of considerable value, the possession of which he calculated would purchase for him numerous indulgences; but he forgot to speculate upon the chances of detection. A more attentive speculator was at hand in Sancho Torquemada, who caught him in the perpetration of the crime, and made his promise of secrecy the bond that was to bind Ramirez to him as his devoted agent in every species of atrocity.

And amongst those crimes of deep and deadly die, perpetrated through this compact,

was the immolation of a daughter of the house of Verodia, a sister of Don Ferdinand's, intended by her family for the veil, and to succeed to the supremacy of Santa Barbara.

At a grand festival in honour of their patron saint, Sancho first beheld the beautiful Zamira de Verodia, and, full of stratagem, he obtained, both for himself and satellite, an appointment that gave them opportunities of visiting the community of Santa Barbara in the most confidential character of their function, that of confessor; and under that sacred mask he made his unhallowed passion known to the virtuous Zamira, whose reception of the insulting declaration leaving the profanely hypocritical wretch in no doubt that she would proclaim his infamy to her brother and their diocesan, employed his creature Ramirez to lose no time in silencing her for ever.

Ramirez stood his trial for the pitiless murder, secure of pardon through the potent interest of the austere impostor. But in leagues like those which vice had formed between these miscreants, clashing views will often war; and

the slave, purchased for vile purposes, will sometimes dare to assume the supremacy, which confederacy in guilt must yield, even over his employer. And so Ramirez now demurred at the project of giving up Lady Alvina to the church, since his thirst for vengeance had decreed otherwise; and Father Sancho, in his appetite for saintly fame, had determined the triumph for himself of bending this contumacious spirit, and leading her, an apparently willing proselyte, to conventual vows.

An altercation upon the subject was proceeding in cautious terms by Sancho, and with daring violence on the part of Ramirez, when they passed the ambush of the amazed Lopez. But it not according with the policy of the hypocrite, who polluted the holy garb he wore, to irritate the miscreant whose services were essential to him, he had contrived to sooth Ramirez into perfect amity, ere Lopez was established in his auditory station, to hear the continuation of their converse over their repast, in the following words:—

"*Por vida de Santa Maria! Madre de*

Dios!" said Father Sancho, protruding his eye-balls into the deformity of a hideous goggle; " but you have not the causes for enmity to the accursed race of Verodia that I have. By the lives of the holy saints! if the young *diablo* of an unthought-of witness did affix the eternal stigma of the *san benito* upon you, have you not been well paid for it? *In verbo sacerdotis* have you, by protection and indulgences, which have afforded you a latitude in enjoyments that else must have long since called for our prayers for you amongst *las animas.* As for me, what are my causes of enmity to that devoted race? The sister, the lovely, inflexible Zamira de Verodia, stamped my before invulnerable heart with a passion which time has not found balms to cure; and her abhorrence awakened a deadly pang of vindictive frenzy that urged me on to ———. But we will not talk of that which racks the inward man, — no, no, no, — another draught of this superlative beverage, and now let us scoff at conscience, and its ———. Away with its flames and its scor-

pions, and let us talk only of our enmity and vengeance. Next of the race comes Stefano, the profligate Stefano. He penetrated, he developed—*por vida de Madre de Dios!* yes, he dared to suspect my sanctity, the sanctity of my life, and dared to breathe that suspicion to another. That other, suspecting me, yet lives, and I have not yet had power to crush him."

"*Por vida del diablo!* say but the word, and he shall not live," vociferated Ramirez.

"Not so," returned the arch-fiend Sancho. "One ray of hope on that account yet cheers my wretched life. Stefano, whom I by my machinations chased as an outlaw from this country, has come into immense possessions, and cleared away, by the power of gold no doubt, the clouds that overshadowed his loyalty,—is returning to Spain. By his hand, mark me, I mean he whom he taught to suspect me shall perish; at least so it shall appear."

"*Diablo* of h—l! but thou art the very pontiff of arch-crime!" exclaimed Ramirez, with a demoniac laugh of exultation.

"Yes," responded Sancho, chuckling in horrible satisfaction; "I flatter myself I do understand the theory as well as practice of revenge. Through the blandishments of that theory I entwined myself into the esteem, and almost idolatrous veneration of him my soul abhors, the haughty and credulous Ferdinand de Verodia, and his adored *cortéjo;* and by the specious manœuvring of this precious theory I became to them as the smoothly flowing stream of friendship, out of which they sipped, and poisoned all their happiness. Mine was the rich banquet to feast upon their mutual peace, whilst I led them on to find every bitterness which mortal lip could taste, in distrust, in jealousy, in all that could plant racks and scorpion stings in the breast of ardent passion; and, as a climax to my plan of vengeance, at length I parted them; transforming her into a perjured heart-broken nun, and him into a wretch forlorn, believing in my friendship and integrity, to be actuated just whichever way my purpose pointed. But this monotony in the misery of Don Ferdinand

now palls upon my vengeance. By the feast of All Souls it craves diversity in its insatiable appetite; and to see the accursed brother of the proscribed Stefano suffering tortures for the inflictions of those whom his foolishly weak kindred affections lead him to cling to, is what my vengeance now is panting for."

"In the manœuvring of this profound theory of yours," returned Ramirez, with a diabolical grin, "you forgot to enumerate the destruction of Stefano's favourite sister's fame and happiness. Well did we manœuvre that sweet banquet of revenge. Through her degradation you feasted on the sweets of vengeance for Zamira's squeamishness, and I by her consequent misery had sufficient retaliation to extenuate the *san benito*, had mine been a pusillanimous nature which could be appeased. But my heart, in vindictive enmity, swore — and repentance knows no channel to that heart — that only with life shall my vengeful retribution know cessation. And now to the unpardonable injury of the *san benito*, have I to add the spilling of my precious blood; and

por vida del diablo! drop by drop shall the soothing distillations come in reprisal from the miscreant's writhing heart. Ay, my friend! my patron! my protector! your vengeance upon the miserable Ferdinand shall find a glorious treat, when he shall behold the victims for whom I have destined my secret prisons, attended through their sufferings — herself, perhaps, the greatest sufferer of the party — by his idol niece, this Lady Alvina, stolen, yes, even unauthorized by you, stolen from the protection of the ecclesiastic power by me, even daring me! and bestowed upon my most atrocious worthy."

Lopez Peralta, with nerves unstrung by the recent scenes of his own domestic sorrow, was unable to sustain the intelligence of such diabolical plots being in agitation; and subdued at once by horrid apprehension for the menaced peace of the pure as lovely Alvina, he sunk back on the heap of mouldering stones upon which he had placed himself; so nearly reduced to the insensibility of a swoon, that he lost the recital of the further cruelties of re-

venge projecting by these demons; for he revived not until the choice beverage they had greedily swallowed to soothe the agitation of their diabolical passions, or rather, as it seemed, for the inspiration of more fiendlike energies in their vindictive purposes, consigned them to a sonorous *siesta;* when Lopez recovered sufficiently for attempting his perilous descent, and perceiving through a spiracle the cause of the confederates' silence, cherishing no hope of hearing more at present, he determined to make good his retreat whilst the coast was clear.

CHAPTER VIII.

Lopez regained his home of sorrow with his agitated mind full of terrific alarms for Lady Alvina, his poor master Don Ferdinand, and the other menaced victims of the demons of revenge. His heart bled for her who had exerted her resistless powers for his restoration to his mother's affection; and for whose rescue he possessed no clew, no, not even in hope's perspective: he knew not in what part of the globe Don Ferdinand was to be found; and he felt, that even could he trace his mysterious route, he could not cherish expectation, transgressor as he confessedly had been, that his single testimony would be credited, to shake the faith of Don Ferdinand, against the man whom he not merely obeyed as his oracle, but worshipped as a beatified saint.

The forlorn Lopez possessed neither friend nor confidential counsellor to whom he could

apply for advice, save Father Felipe, whom he had no chance of seeing until the morrow; and even then, could he be assured the good monk would believe his attestations? For it could scarcely increase the chance of conviction, the charge being made by an obscure individual, who had openly swerved from the path of duty, and mingled in the society of profligate stage-players and jugglers; (of his further degradation, he knew the holy father was yet in ignorance;) and directed against a venerated character, celebrated for piety and every virtue under heaven.

The sad evening of poor Lopez was employed in attendance upon the persons who were to perform the last sad offices for his lamented mother; and not until those persons had departed from the *cortijo* for the night, could he make use of the mattock which he had encountered such an extraordinary adventure in obtaining. But at length he did emerge from the secret chamber where the late distressing scene of death had been laid, the mysterious deposite in his hand; and when

secure from interruption in his own apartment, he unclosed a casket which he had found beneath the structure of poor Marcella's painful toil; and to his infinite surprise discovered in it only a ring of apparent value, and a packet traced in the well-known characters of his father's writing.

The prompt conjecture of the alarmed Lopez was, that his father had been engaged in political mysteries, too probably of a treasonable nature; that the ring was some important signet; and that his mother, through the influence of connubial affection and authority, had been involved in some serious way, so as to have occasioned her apparently inexplicable conduct. But soon a solution opened to his view, which his filial sensibility felt full sorely, even as deeply as if Gasper Peralta, his beloved father, had now stood confessed to him as the disgraced culprit of convicted treason.

Bitter were now the conflicting feelings of this afflicted son, wounded most sensibly through the dishonour of his father, and in

anguished admiration of the magnanimous sufferings of his martyred mother. But to tread in her steps, to conceal as she had done that which had bowed her to the tomb with shame and sorrow, humanity and gratitude forbade. The fate of Lady Alvina was in his hands; and could he make it a question, whether to consign her to all the horrors with which the confederate demons of vengeance menaced her, or sacrifice the fair fame of a deceased individual of no importance in society?

For several hours the filial piety of Lopez presented its negative to the dictates of his other feelings. For himself, he had no voice to raise in opposition, since he had, as an individual, tarnished his family honour, and he individually could not leave its unblemished fame to posterity. At length gratitude to his lovely advocate conquered every opposing argument; horror of Vasquez and Ramirez vanquished shame; and though with burning cheeks and swelling heart, he no longer paused

in making his humiliating communications to Father Felipe.

This reverend priest, of holy life and fame, received this interesting confession with all the benevolent kindness which unaffected piety and a feeling heart could inspire; and in that part of the communication which told of the horrors impending over the fate of Lady Alvina, Lopez found the good father by no means disposed to doubt through any feeling of veneration for the austere saint Sancho; for Father Felipe had himself developed cruelty beneath the specious mask of this inflexible churchman's sanctity, — cruelty, which told to this sterling stamped Christian, that Sancho was not of the chosen flock of the good and gentle Shepherd. And further, for the consolation of the anxious Lopez, in his panting hope for the rescue of Alvina, the holy monk confided in him the secret that their venerable diocesan himself suspected the pure stamp of Sancho's piety, and was only waiting for proofs to aid him in the impeachment of the sanctified impostor.

Both Father Felipe and Lopez Peralta, knowing the abbess of Santa Barbara was so tenderly attached to Lady Alvina as to affect her health, upon learning the pitiless persecution this interesting unfortunate was doomed by bigotry to endure, agreed in not imparting to her the dire alarms they had cause for entertaining.

After much deliberation, our two anxious confederates determined, that immediately after the interment of Marcella, Lopez should hasten to Madrid with information from Father Felipe to his diocesan of the discoveries which had been made by Lopez; and also with a letter to the banker Don Pedro Ariol, to entreat from him the address of Don Ferdinand de Verodia.

The anxious Lopez made no delay in his route to the metropolis; and the lively interest of the exemplary Bishop of ——— being fully awakened for the innocent Alvina, he humanely gave the matter his most serious consideration, and flattered himself and the anxious Lopez with hope of proving ultimately

successful in unmasking hypocritical villany, as well as in restoring the long persecuted Alvina to the tender protection of her natural friends.

Don Pedro Ariol candidly acknowledged to the kind prelate — who humanely made personal application upon the subject — that he was not at liberty to disclose the present retreat of Don Ferdinand de Verodia; but, that possibly the abbess of Santa Barbara might be under no restriction, and be competent to inform his lordship, as she was in correspondence with Don Ferdinand; for he, Don Pedro, had recently received a packet from the secretary of Father Sancho Torquemada, with orders to have it transmitted by express to Santa Barbara, it being from the patron of the community, Don Ferdinand de Verodia.

Under the hope which this intelligence inspired, Lopez immediately returned to the *cortijo*—which, through the kindness of Don Ferdinand in his presentation to Marcella, had now devolved to him—and soon after his

arrival at this sequestered spot, repaired to the cell of Father Felipe, to impart his communications.

But the holy man he found in grief and consternation; from whom he promptly learned, "that the abbess of Santa Barbara had, a few days since, after receiving a letter which had greatly disturbed her, entered the convent church alone, as she was in the habit of doing, for the purpose of privately performing her sacred duties; but from whence she had never returned — having vanished from the church, leaving no clew to the means by which her mysterious disappearance had been effected. That the afflicted sisterhood were firmly of opinion she had been borne away by supernatural agency to beatification, and had implored him to compose a prayer to be addressed to her in future; but, that he, although decidedly of opinion their lost superior merited beatification as much as mortal could do, felt no persuasion of such a consolatory nature; being convinced she had vanished through diabolical means. And her

being of the proscribed race of Verodia, no doubt remained in his mind of whom were the perpetrators of the sacrilegious enterprise.

Lopez Peralta most fully participated in the alarm and distress of Father Felipe; but, active in his gratitude to the unfortunate abbess, he could not rest without making some efforts for discovering the agency, at least, of the barbarous treachery that had been practised; and, in defiance of his fatigue from travelling, he, in the dead of that very night, proceeded to the fortress to explore every part of it, to discover if the kind, the pious abbess of Santa Barbara, were in confinement there; or if there were inhabitants of any description upon the premises.

This bold enterprise Lopez accomplished alone, and found none of his late *camaradas* there to awaken repentance for his temerity. All was silent desolation. But, well acquainted with all the domestic concerns, as well as with the geography of the place, he ascertained that viands had very recently been cooked in the kitchen; that some of the beds had been

occupied since his last visit, and that the stables had also been tenanted. All these proofs only confirmed the conviction of Father Felipe; and induced the resolute Lopez to venture thither the following day at noon, in the almost hopeless expectation of something having been left behind that might yield a clew for pursuit; or, at all events, by a close investigation of the direction the feet of their mules had taken on departure, to form some conjecture relative to their route.

For some time the active Lopez gained nothing by this second investigation; but at last, stumbling over a rosary, which, from having observed such a one worn by the unfortunate abbess of Santa Barbara, he doubted not belonged to her, he felt induced to even a more minute investigation of the deserted ruin; and at length, to mount up to the signal tower, which, beside exterior machinery for conveying instructions to those abroad, contained a table, whereon a hieroglyphic sort of character used to inform those of the horde who entered the fortress, during

the absence of their *companeros*, where those absent companions were gone, and if their aid were requisite.

Although Lopez proceeded to this once important spot, it was wholly without expectation of finding any thing relative to the route by which the abbess had been conveyed registered there. Great, therefore, were the transports of his joy, on discovering full instructions to one of the horde, named Jago, to make no delay in following those who had there left orders for him, to Malaga; and to be careful, as he prized his life, of the important despatches with which he was intrusted.

That these instructions had been left for Jago by those very individuals who had performed the diabolical achievement he was so anxious to trace, Lopez felt thorough conviction; and as he very well knew, that had Jago yet arrived to receive the directions the table contained, those characters would have been obliterated by him ere his departure, prudence required he should make no delay in quitting a spot, where the recognition of Jago

might not only be attended with destruction to himself, but with annihilation to the efforts he now might prove the humble means of setting on foot, for the rescue of the benevolent abbess of Santa Barbara.

The wary Lopez, ere he left the signal tower, considered it sound policy to alter the destination of Jago by a change of character on the tablet, as delaying the delivery of the despatches he had charge of might prevent the immediate completion of the dire plots against the devoted race of Verodia; whilst effacing the instructions altogether, he argued, might detain a troublesome miscreant near himself; or, by turning him upon his own conjectures for his route, lead him to a successful termination.

This judicious alteration performed, Lopez hastened to the cell of Father Felipe with his important communications; and after some consultation, it was agreed between them, that Lopez should immediately proceed to Malaga, and there make all the wary observations and inquiries which circumstances might permit; whilst, on the other hand, the

holy father should hasten to the Bishop of ———, with all the further information the researches of Lopez had supplied; and when aided by the good prelate's sapient counsels, and possibly otherwise powerful assistance, to join his faithful auxiliary Lopez in Granada.

CHAPTER IX.

Lopez Peralta proceeded to Malaga without delay; and having possessed himself of various dresses for disguise, was enabled to walk about the town and its environs in every direction, making all the inquiries his acute intellect suggested, with little danger of discovery; his first juvenile indiscretion having initiated him in the power of performing the metamorphosis of character, with every new species of costume which he found it expedient to assume.

In the course of his varied transmutations, Lopez encountered many of his old *camaradas* of the fortress, also in different disguises; but having at length detected every one of them, under the capuchin-hood, and when so habited performing works of conspicuous charity, as if the daily employment of their immaculate

lives, Lopez devoted himself to observation of these benevolent friars; and, in making inquiry relative to them, ascertained, that at no great distance from Malaga, a convent of pious capuchins had recently been established in a monastery, which had been evacuated through the alarms awakened by the cruelties of the late invaders, who had so fatally depopulated their bleeding country, and annihilated or dispersed so many religious communities. That the prior appointed to this new convent, through the interest of the pious Father Sancho, of the cathedral of T——, was an embryo saint; that, after his example, the brethren were of such austere and abstemious lives, they not only filled the hermitages in the most lonely parts of the mountain near Alhama, and up towards the pass of Zaffaraya, but had erected new hermitages on the most desolate parts of the coast; where, whilst they led their saintly lives of abstinence and prayer, they aided by boats belonging to their benevolent community, shipwrecked mariners;

not only in their nautical distress, but with every further assistance which charity could bestow.

Lopez having further learned, that this monastery, now so defiled by hypocrisy at least, had for ages been the resort of bands of pilgrims, to whom the friars were obliged, by the rules of their order, to give maintenance and lodging for three days, if required; and that, although the devout zest for pilgrimage had long abated, and the late political calamities of the nation had almost annihilated religious ceremonies, yet pilgrims were now daily appearing, drawn by the distresses of the late warfare to avail themselves, no doubt, of the relief here afforded at this hospitable shrine. Having personal courage sufficient for any undertaking, Lopez assumed the palmer's weeds; and joining a party which he had watched for on the road, gained admittance, where some of his old associates received him in the guise of profound sanctity, and treated the mendicant troop with all the temperance, in cheer, which was consistent with

the abstemious brethren of the Prior Ramirez to bestow.

Lopez completed his three days of anxious sojourn in this monastery without acquiring any particle of that information he had entered it to obtain, even though he saw the miscreant Ramirez profaning the altars by officiating in the function he polluted; but only in the chapel had his late chief been visible to Lopez; and there in such evident good case, that Lopez could not doubt the only penance this goodly prior inflicted upon himself, was, when for short intervals he wore the mask of piety.

But, although Lopez and his fellow pilgrims were not let behind the curtain, this wary observer perceived that others were; for not half the pilgrims who daily entered the monastery were afterwards seen by him, or ever appeared at the temperate board to which he was admitted; and more than once, in his three sleepless nights there, the shout and song of revelry had reached his ear, borne louder than the solemn note of the organ, or

the sonorous chant of some subordinate monks, who were doomed by the demons who governed the institution to perform most regularly the impious form of nocturnal masses.

When, therefore, that Father Felipe with all his credentials arrived at Malaga, although Lopez had much to communicate, he had not that especial information which could, by substantial proof, lead them at once to effective means for the rescue of the abbess of Santa Barbara, or for unmasking those dire hypocrites, who, for their own sinister purposes, profaned a holy garb. But soon Mr. Bellwood, the British consul, with the other authorities — to whom Father Felipe was the bearer of letters from the English ambassador, as well as from the first minister at the court of Madrid — promising every protection to Lopez Peralta, when it should suit his project to break faith with the impostors, he agreed to join the den of wolves in sheep's clothing, as a stray cub from their fold; and accordingly, as Lopez Peralta, he presented himself before Vasquez one day in the road to the monastery;

and by a plausible story, of how he had been held in durance vile by the French army, after wounding him upon the plain of Vittoria, accounted for his long absence, lengthened by his difficulty in tracing out the new haunts of his *camaradas*.

The comic talents of Lopez Peralta had rendered him a general favourite with his nefarious *companeros* of the horde; and with none more so than with Vasquez, even rugged and diabolical as he was: the recognition, therefore, was cordial on the part of this brigand, who flattered the welcome Lopez with the anticipation of carousals of great joy upon his return to the community.

"For though we live in a gloomy monastery," said he, "*por vida de Santo Bacchus!* it is to enjoy the good things of this world, without the confounded annoyance of constant apprehension that some over-righteous alguacil might do his duty, and close our eyes instead of the eyes of justice."

And now Vasquez hastened to impart to his new-found *camarada*, whom he believed a

brigand in heart, as well as name, all the iniquities of their present institution, established for piracy and contraband dealings; as well as for the still more illicit trade of robbery and murder; and how all possibility of suspicion was warded off from them, by removing their station so far from their former scenes of predatory action; and, by having for their acknowledged patron the most renowned austerity of the church, the prime friend and favourite of one of the heads of the holy office.

"A head," continued Vasquez, "not of true Roman antiquity of structure—not too well furnished, by my sagacity! or he could never have become a dupe to this sanctified crab of a patron of ours, who is now on a visit at our Pandemonium. *Por vida del diablo!* but he must be a prime *tuno*, who could deceive me as this sanctification does his patron. No, no; I can see the true heart of every man in the twinkling of half an eye."

"Never trust in me," exclaimed Lopez, "but the *tuno* must be a match for the *diablo*,

who could deceive you, Vasquez. But pray, may I not be favoured with the name of this august patron of our establishment?"

"Why, if you can hear it, *camarada*, without your flesh creeping in fancied recoil from the misericordia," responded Vasquez, "here's for it. Father Sancho, the renowned!"

"*Diablo!*" exclaimed Lopez, "how am I to appear before his saintship? For after consigning me to perdition for my first fault, he will scarcely endure to let me behold him with his mask off. Why, zounds! man, not possessing your penetration, he will be continually suspecting me of betraying him, through vengeance for his routing me from the favour of my patron. What exploit must I perform, Vasquez, my best friend, to secure his confidence? Must I not seem equal to pluck the *diablo* by the beard, to convince him I am a staunch member, fit for his association?"

"*Por vida del diablo!* but this requires consideration, *camarada*," responded Vasquez; "but leave the matter to me, and my penetra-

tion will delve into the course you must take before this hollow Colossus of sanctification. Not that he has dropped his mask to any of our community, save our brave prior, though my sagacity penetrated beneath it. 'Ay,' thought I to myself, 'could he be the bosom friend and familiar companion of our blood-gorging chief, Ramirez, and not discover some oozing of the sanguinary stream? Could they have had transactions of even the common forms of social fellowship, and not detect the practised freebooter? No, no,' thinks I; 'and if he have discovered the horns of Satan, and takes those horns in friendly grasp, there is congeniality of nature; and *por vida del diablo!* my patron! I know you, most holy patron of our community.' Thus argued my sagacity, *camarada;* but not another *tuno* of the horde suspects him. They all believe in the necessity of the show of monkish mummery, which our deep prior has ordered us to display before him; and when we groan and sigh, cross and belabour our bosoms, or turn our eyeballs from the light of day to inward

darkness, in attestation of our holiness, before our patron, I am ready to change my tones to peals of laughter at the unnecessary bombast; or of thundering out curses at the infliction of such unpalatable trouble."

"However, my welcome merry *camarada*," continued Vasquez, "we have time before us for considering of your line of conduct relative to this stiff prop of our security; he being gone a tour with our prior, to visit our distant outposts of sham charity. Ay, ay, for the pleasant charity of easing the unwary traveller of the trouble of this world's goods, and sending them to the comfort of eternal repose. Hey, *camarada!* are you cold, that you shudder?"

"Shudder!" replied the recoiling Lopez, with the aspect of composure, and in the tone of surprise. "What! can you have forgotten my sort of grotesque chuckle, on the anticipation of rich booty? But, how long do you expect sour Sancho to be absent on this tour?"

"Only till I recall them; on the long expected arrival of that loitering rascal, Jago,

with despatches from Madrid, which he ought to have brought to hand some days since; and without which, we shall lack a spoke in the wheel, by which Ramirez has sworn to whirl off the Lady Alvina, even from the fangs of Sancho and the church, to perform attendance, as my spouse, upon some friends of hers in prison—one of whom we have not yet caged; but the game is sprung—Cameron, the rascal who wounded our chief, and escaped our clutches in the valley. We know the preserve he perches in, and we know how to take effective aim."

CHAPTER X.

We now find it necessary to return, for a few hours, to Menroy Castle, and shall resume our English transactions with our active performer, Fauconberg; who, although sad at heart, met his friends at their breakfast-board the morning after the masked ball at Rosindale Park, with an aspect that betrayed no secret of a mind disturbed.

Not so poor Cameron; for an anxious perturbation, proclaimed in every line of his eloquent countenance, must have been visible to his companions, had not Fauconberg feared to let their eyes meet, lest Cameron should read, "that the weakness of hopeless love was once more at serious warfare with his peace," and that Nettlethorp and Marchmont had arisen from their pillows with oppressive headaches, from the noisy revel of the preceding evening.

Immediately after breakfast Nettlethorp and the now dispirited Marchmont walked out, for the ostensible purpose of getting rid of their ailments by the salutary sea-breezes upon the beach; when Cameron, although panting to commence some of the most interesting communications that confiding friendship could repose, and yet shrinking from the task, hastily withdrew, to summon that firmness which he needed; and thus was Fauconberg most opportunely left alone to receive General De la Warr, who very shortly after was announced.

"My dear General, you are welcome!" Fauconberg exclaimed.

"Yes, a *very* dear General I had nearly proved to you, my gallant hero!" responded General De la Warr, who instantly flew to Fauconberg, and in evident agitation clasped him to his bosom. "Yes, Fauconberg, when, stripling as you were, you intrepidly braved professional censure, with loss of life, from a far superior force, to rescue me from the peril with which my own unpardonable im-

petuosity had encompassed me and my gallant staff."

"But, my dear and heroic preserver!" continued the General, endeavouring to resume his firmness, "as we are now most opportunely alone, and I trust not likely to be interrupted, allow me to make that confession and apology for past conduct to you, which it had been more magnanimous to have performed long since. We have all, Fauconberg, weak points; and mine has been an unvanquishable passion for superlative fame as a General. It took possession of me like the mania of mental malady, when my domestic happiness was blasted. But the bane, as you well know, to my coveted fame, was impetuosity.

"Twice, Fauconberg, had I narrowly escaped leading my brave companions to destruction by the imprudence of my uncurbed ardour, ere that memorable day, when you led your invincibles to rescue me from the surrounding ambush of the enemy. I had then a powerful rival, who languished to obscure my military glory — to extinguish it by

his own — and when, from your commanding martello tower, you perceived the magnitude of the danger encompassing me and my unsuspecting companions, you, undisciplined as you then were, understanding no tactics but those of intuitive humanity, rushed forth to succour me. I well knew, that were the fact, as it really stood, revealed, my renown as a General would be effectually blighted, through the manœuvring of my individual enemy: whilst you, Fauconberg, through the impetuosity of courage and humanity which led you to abandon so critical a post to rescue an unwary General, called for reprimand, it could not divest of that bright fame and admiration which such intrepidity demanded and obtained. I uttered that hateful reprimand with an aching heart, and without any confession; for I knew not whether I dared confide in you.

"But from that painful moment you became inexpressibly dear to that heart, which, with grief and mortification, I saw you mentally pronounced ungenerous and unfeeling. From that hour I have anxiously watched over you,

until I found that every way you merited my esteem, until my interest for you became almost paternal; even so much so, that I romantically projected an union between you and my niece and ward Olivia De la Warr; but to the accomplishment of that cherished wish, fate, as rumour whispers, has raised an insurmountable barrier. However, to you, Fauconberg, whom I consider the most disinterested of men, as one whom no lure of fortune could lead to deviate from the dictates of your own mind, I reveal my further projects for our consanguinity. My niece Alethea Brudenel ———"

The agitated General was at this moment interrupted by the sudden entrance of the equally agitated Cameron, who, having just assumed firmness to enter upon his important communications, and not aware of Fauconberg having any companion, presented himself, with a countenance as pale and piteous as internal agony could make it.

The recognition between General De la Warr and Cameron was kind and cordial; but

in a few minutes after meeting the former exclaimed —

"Have you been ill, Mr. Cameron? or are you ill? Why, with concern, I can pronounce you 'the skeleton of your regiment personified.'"

"Cameron affirms that he is in perfect health, General," said Fauconberg, mournfully; "yet I have my doubts. The visible attenuation of his frame, and daily decreasing strength, do not argue very forcibly the blessing of perfect health."

"I will bring Macduff down upon you, and he shall take all your ailments by storm," returned the General, kindly. "In the mean time, the Hebes at Rosindale Cottage must take you in hand; and when fair ladies prescribe, gallant heroes cannot choose but acquiesce."

"Fauconberg is going abroad with me," said Cameron, after most gracefully thanking General De la Warr for his kind interest. "This good friend of mine, and well I may call him my good friend! has toiled like a

slave at the oar for the completion of his literary labours, to allow of his accompanying me to Spain."

Fauconberg's cheeks became like the brightest tints of the damask rose, from consciousness of this meditated excursion of theirs being for the sole purpose of seeking intelligence, through the abbess of Santa Barbara, of the fate of the too interesting Alvina.

"To Spain! Spain!" reiterated the General, as his aspect betrayed some deeper emotion than that of surprise. "Why, what in the name of wonder can direct your course thither? Certainly neither for medical skill nor salubrious air for you, Mr. Cameron. And as for you, Fauconberg, are you weary of life, man, and want the banditti of the valley of Santa Barbara to perpetrate their threatened vengeance?"

"But, come," continued General De la Warr, as he fixed his penetrating gaze in anxious scrutiny upon the expressive countenance of Fauconberg, "shall I guess the attraction? Some fair lady, some lovely recluse, some per-

secuted damsel perhaps, whom your knight errantry pants to extricate from the merciless fangs of cruel bigotry. Some fair Aurora, or Angelica, or Al——"

"Oh! no, no such matter. There is nothing in the form of gallantry about to flap our wings from Old England, I assure you, General," exclaimed Fauconberg, who, in terror at the agonized amazement which beamed over the countenance of Cameron, strove to terminate allusions which, in thoughtless *badinage*, he knew not how might wound his mysterious friend; who, however, could not feel more astonishment than himself at the apparent omniscience of the General.

This anxiety, betrayed by the guileless Fauconberg, so expressive of mystery connected with Cameron and Spain, at once aroused the penetrating General to a suspicion of Cameron being the identical individual he was full of painful solicitude to find; but as, from the manner of Fauconberg, any endeavour to penetrate that mystery which had thus glanced

upon his mind, was at present inadmissible, he cheerfully responded —

"Well, well, I will not peep beneath your wings to penetrate what wind blows you hence. But should you become inclined to a trio in your excursion, perhaps, by applying to your old friend at Rosindale Cottage, you may hear of an associate who is full as anxious as any man in existence to trace out hidden secrets in Hispania. But come, Fauconberg, escort me down your castle hill, for I must make no long tarrying, as I am in momentary expectation of a summons from Rosindale Park, relative to a notable exploit of the Proteus of last night."

Fauconberg accompanied General De la Warr; and the moment they had entered upon the descent of the hill, the latter, taking the arm of his companion, in a tone of agitated feeling, said —

"Fauconberg, forgive the liberty which insupportable anxiety urges me on to take. I implore, I conjure you, tell me, does the

castle of Menroy contain an individual designated Xavier Almedina?"

"General De la Warr," returned the amazed Albert, "that is a question I am wholly incompetent to answer. If I have met with an individual of that name in Menroy Castle, it is unacknowledged by himself; and upon the subject of mere surmise I do not feel at liberty to speak."

"When admiring the intrepid valour of Mr. Cameron, which perpetually called for my distinguishing approbation in our professional career," replied the General, "I have learned from time to time of the impenetrable mystery which enveloped him; which, now added to your evident anxiety to turn my allusions from the fair fugitive you rescued in the valley of Santa Barbara before him, have awakened my suspicions of his being the very man I pant to find. As you do not absolutely forbid my cherishing these suspicions, I will act upon them. Not indelicately, Fauconberg — not to force my recognition on him. My purpose is to address a letter to Xavier

Almedina, enclosed to Mr. Cameron, in whose power it will be to acknowledge the address or not, as he thinks proper. You, my dear Fauconberg, will have no objection, I trust, to be the bearer of this letter for me, when I tell you, it is not to injure Cameron, and may possibly prove the means of restoring my only hope of earthly happiness.

"The subject of this deep interest to me I was about to enter upon, my dear preserver, when interrupted by Mr. Cameron, who has awakened such a tumult of hopes in my agitated bosom, that I dare not now enter upon a theme which I feel would totally unfit me for obeying my summons to Rosindale Park. To-morrow you shall know all I wish to impart to you; and should my hopes, through Mr. Cameron, be realized, you will have me for a companion to Spain, if you object not; and from your feeling heart I look for much consolation in my anxieties."

Having now descended the castle hill, General De la Warr desired his companion to proceed with him to the cottage, where he was

expected that morning; and where, when they arrived, General De la Warr again presented Fauconberg to his fair relatives, and in a manner even more expressive of estimation than on the preceding evening; now, for the first time, announcing to his family "that to this gallant hero he owed the preservation of his life."

After such an introduction, Fauconberg could not confine his visit to the circumscription of compulsive ceremony; and as all the party to whom he was thus presented were highly fascinating in conversation, he felt no wish for an early retreat; and at length, when he did take leave, he was the bearer of the projected letter from General De la Warr to Cameron.

The manner in which General De la Warr had requested Fauconberg to become the bearer of this letter, had precluded the possibility of a negative, more especially as he could make no communication to excuse himself. Yet it was far, very far, from being a pleasurable undertaking, for he could not forget how a

reference to the name of Xavier Almedina had been before received by poor Cameron; and now he felt it as an utter impossibility to deliver the letter as if wholly unacquainted with its subject; but in what mode to prepare the mental sufferer for that which might bear heavily upon his susceptible feelings he knew not; and, a most reluctant Mercury, he lingered on his way to the castle, where, on seeking Cameron, he found he had retired to his chamber not quite well.

The alarmed Fauconberg found him extended on his couch, from which he arose at his entrance; and on the anxious demand of friendship, as to the nature of his ailment, Cameron replied —

"Mental solely, my dear Albert. The allusions of General De la Warr to our attraction to Spain, with your evident anxiety to spare me the pang of hearing them, proclaimed most unequivocally that he knows something of Alvina, which you are convinced I should not like to hear."

"On my solemn word," responded Fau-

conberg, " I know not what the General may have heard of the lovely and interesting Alvina. I only acted from apprehension, lest his mentioning her at all might distress you. That he has heard something of her, which has awakened great interest, I have reason to conjecture; and that he believes you acquainted with persons and circumstances which he is in quest of information to discover, I also imagine; but how he came to conceive that from you this information might arise, I must premise was through no communication of mine, Cameron. I promised you my faith in friendship, and rest firmly on the inviolability of that faith. However, it is possible that I have here the full confidence of General De la Warr for you in this letter, which he importuned me to be the bearer of, with his request, 'that should you know the gentleman to whom the enclosure is directed, you will kindly forward it.'"

" Cameron," continued Fauconberg, " I am too ingenuous to affect ignorance of the

name which may surprise you there. Pause, therefore, to collect your firmness ere you break the seal; and in that pause consult your feelings for your reply to my question, and let them solely govern you. Do you, or do you not, wish for my absence whilst you peruse this letter?"

"My friend! my faithful friend!" exclaimed the agitated Cameron, pressing emphatically the hand of Fauconberg, "my firmness, I believe, can now find few trials it is unequal to, when I have had power to bring it to the determination of imparting every secret which wrings my heart to you, ere we embark for Spain. Yet I do wish you now to leave me; for those who address the son of desolation, whom you have anticipated this address of General De la Warr is meant for, can only touch on subjects likely to subdue me to weakness, which I should blush to evince even before you, Fauconberg."

"Cameron, believe me I would not wish to steal from your confidence one word, one

thought, you might ever wish recalled," said Fauconberg. "Not knowing more of your affairs than you have confided in me, I cannot know the nature of the intelligence which may await you from the communications of General De la Warr. Yet, believing it possible they may affect you, even to making the services of friendship necessary, I will retire no farther than my own chamber, from which you can quickly summon me."

Albert, faithful to his promise, repaired to his own chamber, where, with unsteady paces, he wandered up and down, calling up his firmness to sustain him through any possible trial, which the General's communications to Cameron might decree for his enduring from love or friendship; but scarcely more than half an hour had he been thus collecting fortitude, when the summons he almost dreaded, yet longed for, recalled him to the apartment of his friend, whom he now found standing with his back against the wall, and looking like the motionless statue of despair, the letter of General De la Warr grasped in his cold

and convulsed hand, whilst on every line of his fine and eloquent countenance was depicted a mournful and touching expression of hopeless desolation.

"Albert," Cameron exclaimed, in accents according with the sad expression of his aspect. "Albert, you now behold in me a wretch alone in this world! If General De la Warr's intelligence is indeed authentic, I can no longer claim kindred with any virtue under heaven. Yes, Albert, dear Albert, I stand bereft of all, but the misery that dies my cheek with shame. Yet you, my friend! you, whom the pangs of even fancied rivalry could not chase from the maniac's hapless couch, you will not now forsake me?"

Fauconberg rushed forward, caught Cameron in his arms, and clasped him with fervour to the swelling bosom of faithful friendship, as the impetuous tears of sympathy gushed from his eyes in torrents.

Cameron received the pledge of fidelity thus affectingly given by a convulsive pressure to his bursting heart; and then gently, though

resolutely, drawing back from Fauconberg, said —

" By the friendship and compassion you cherish for me, I conjure you to remand your firmness to its station, that you may become competent to the task I have in store for you. Know, my friend, even before the part which you must take in replying to General De la Warr for me called for a more extended confidence, I had determined to withdraw from you the mystery which has hitherto encompassed me. For I felt that ere you embarked on dangers and difficulties with me, you ought to know the companion you embarked with — to know him, although in the degraded form of a dishonoured outcast. Oh! most ingenuous of mankind! that heart which beams through the eyes of faithful friendship, tells me it writhes for me, yet credits not the imputation of dishonour. But it is true, Fauconberg; and I have survived my knowledge of it. Here, my friend, is the memoir of my sad destiny, which I recalled from your hands in order to make some necessary additions, and

to subjoin to my will a power of attorney, and other essential matters I wished to confide in you.

"This narrative was hastily drawn up for your perusal after my decease or mental calamity; but misery, ever attached to me, came in another cruel form to lead you sooner to my bitter secrets. The uncertain fate of my beloved Alvina, or ———. But retire now, my estimable friend, and hasten to peruse the sad memoir of a wretched man. You will then know all that I know of the interesting subject upon which General De la Warr has questioned me, and you will answer him for me, without betraying more of my hapless desolation than necessity may require. Of General De la Warr we will converse when you return to me; but that return must not take place until the clouds of night shall cast impenetrable shade over that face which you will then look upon with ———. But no, I wrong you, Albert! My beloved friend scorns not those whom ———; but I might fancy that you did so, and my bursting heart

could hold no more calamity. My kind, my generous friend! return not till the day, that sends forth no sunbeams upon me, has shed its last light."

"But how," said the agitated and sympathizing Fauconberg, "how can I leave you thus, Cameron? Leave you, for four long hours at least, in such a state as this is?"

"Fear not for me, my sympathizing friend. Oh! had the brother fate ordained for me possessed the heart of Albert Fauconberg, many of the barbed arrows of my miseries would not have fallen with poisoned points as they have done. But fear not for me, my beloved Albert, I have full employment for the hours of your absence — employment such as your pious heart would recommend. This new page of unexpected calamity, opened by General De la Warr's suggestions, must be digested; and I must seek for firmness where it is only to be found."

In an agony of sympathetic grief, Fauconberg, without even pressing the cold hand of his sorrow-stricken friend, lest it might

subdue his fortitude, left the chamber of poor Cameron, and, with a heavy heart, proceeded to their literary cabinet, where, secure from interruption, he, in almost breathless agitation, broke the seal of mystery, and read.

CHAPTER XI.

" TO ALBERT FAUCONBERG, ESQ.

" To you, who have proved you hold within your bosom a heart wherein all of human excellence is treasured, this moment is, I know, one of sad sympathy for the fate of him whose release from mortal misery, or whose direfully lengthened night of cheerless calamity, has opened long interdicted pages for your perusal.

" My dawn of life I will unclose for you, Fauconberg, as it appeared to myself — sweet and lovely; but it was the deceitful calm that precedes a long day of tempest; and as that dawn formed all of calm tranquillity I ever knew, you will excuse my leading you to this halcyon period ere I communicate the dire history which anteceded my hapless existence,

that spread a sable cloud over my destiny, and blighted every hope and joy for me.

"My recollection of myself opens when I was basking in bliss upon the tender bosom of my mother — that mother still in her teens; and as beautiful, as exquisitely beautiful, as a mortal could be, who had spent three years of her young life in anguished misery.

"On the banks of the Clyde stood the dwelling in which I became aware of my existence — the residence of a divine named Cameron, by birth a Caledonian; and no country ever reared a son of whom she had more reason to be proud. In heart and head he was indeed perfection.

"Mr. Cameron had been preceptor to the Earl of Westhaven, an English peer; and to this little domain, endeared to him by ancestral ties, he had retired upon a serious disagreement with the guardian, who was also mother of his pupil; and this residence being situated in the most sequestered spot of Annandale made it the better suited for the dwelling of

my hapless mother, who looked only in this life for a safe and honourable asylum for herself, and a protector and instructor for her helpless child.

"Mr. Cameron presented Donna Almedina, to the few who strayed to his secluded habitation, as the widow of a Spanish gentleman, a friend of his; and many wondered, that being a foreigner, (for my mother was a Castilian, and a Catholic,) she did not prefer a residence with her own family; but they knew not she was an alien to that family.

"But although my mother's heart was the seat of bitter, bitter sorrows, she allowed them not to fall in melancholy influence upon me. No; all that could exhilarate my spirits was attended to with as much anxious care as she bestowed upon my health, or the training of my heart and mind to early piety and moral virtue; and although I saw her weep each day I lived, and often kissed away her trickling tears, they did not sadden me; for I believed all mothers daily wept, for so this child of sorrow told me.

"My little world continued a paradise to me until I had completed my fifth year; and, as far as I was then able to observe, no person had ever appeared as the express visitor of my mother, or had evinced any particular interest for either of us, out of the kind family we resided with. But once each year Mr. Cameron had disappeared for a few weeks, and on his return brought some costly gift to me.

"At length, when I had arrived at the above-mentioned age, the post brought a newspaper from England; and after my mother had read part of it to Mr. Cameron and his sister, (a most excellent woman, who resided with him,) she suddenly uttered a piercing cry, and fell senseless on the ground.

"My mother was promptly conveyed to her bed; Mr. Cameron as promptly set out on a journey, and during his absence my mother's illness assumed an alarming appearance, and her life was despaired of. Well do I remember the agony of my young heart on not being permitted to enter her bed-room; and perfectly recollect sitting for hours, day

after day, at her chamber door, weeping the bitterest tears of infantine affliction.

"Mr. Cameron returned, accompanied by a physician of eminence, and by a young gentleman dressed in mourning. This young man was extremely handsome, and possessed a majestic mien and manner that commanded prompt obedience and respect from all around him.

"At the moment this party arrived I was at my weeping station, where Mr. Cameron found me, and instantly brought his young guest to behold me.

"'There is Xavier!' said Mr. Cameron. 'Such are his infant agonies. Refuse to comfort him if you can.'

"'By Heaven! his mother's express image!' the stranger exclaimed, as he snatched me into his arms, and darted with me through an open door, whither Mr. Cameron had motioned for him to retire.

"Here the stranger strained me to his bosom with convulsive energy; wept over me in such excess of agony, that my terrors were

awakened. My wild reiterated shrieks drew Mr. Cameron to my rescue, by whom I was kindly though rapidly removed to a distant part of the house; for my cries had reached my suffering mother's ear, and aroused her from her alarming state of insensibility; and, as nothing else could soothe her maternal apprehensions, I was at length taken to her, when my artless transports of joy almost subdued the nearly exhausted sufferer.

"After this affecting interview I was not permitted to see my mother for several days; during which period the stranger made the most indefatigable exertions to conciliate my favour, and with such good effect, that ere I was restored to my mother's arms, I was contented to pass whole hours alone with him.

"At length my mother was pronounced convalescent; and, to my bitter subsequent regret, the very first hour she was able to quit her chamber the good and pious Mr. Cameron joined her hand by special license in holy matrimony to the conciliating stranger, his beloved pupil, the Earl of Westhaven; and

shortly after the marriage ceremony was performed, the bride and bridegroom set out to make, by easy stages, their journey to the metropolis of England; from whence they were to proceed to the Continent for the re-establishment of my mother's health, should the London faculty pronounce such a measure necessary.

"But, alas for me! I was separated from my all; and the destruction of my happiness was in that hour commenced. The affliction of that hapless period I can even now again weep over; but other, deeper sorrows demand communication.

"Mr. Cameron and his amiable sister were all parental kindness to me; but it was long ere I could be soothed into resignation, but never into forgetfulness of what I had been bereaved of.

"My mother's health being so materially benefited by the removal of a large burden of the dire mental misery which had so long preyed upon her, visiting the Continent would have been a measure wholly relinquished, had

it not been for sad domestic causes. The Dowager Lady Westhaven had, with violence, opposed her son's marriage with my mother, and nothing could subdue her displeasure, or reconcile her to it when it had taken place. His lordship, therefore, considered it a judicious measure to continue abroad until this mental tempest should have subsided; but not even the birth of a son and heir to the Westhaven honours could allay the storm; and Lord and Lady Westhaven continued in exile year after year, seeking temporary refuge wherever the sanguinary ambition of the French arms would permit them to remain. During which, to me, sad period, my lively affection for my mother never faded to a fainter glow; and the only joy my pining heart could hail was conveyed to it by her letters; yet I always received them with agonies of tears, and the perusal of them burst open the deep wound inflicted by our separation.

"When I attained my fourteenth year, by the desire of Mr. Cameron I composed some Latin verses on my birth-day, inscribed to my

mother. Mr. Cameron despatched them to her; and as soon as possibility would admit, I received a letter from Lord Westhaven, expressive of much more approbation than even hope had led me to anticipate my little performance could have merited; telling me also, that as the child of his adored wife, I was dear to his heart as his own boy, and concluding with desiring me immediately to inform him, 'Whether there was any thing he could send me from abroad which I wished for to add to my comfort or happiness.'

"Without consulting Mr. Cameron, or even informing him of my intention, I tried my feeble muse in composing a Greek verse, signifying that all my wishes centred in my mother, and that if his lordship could send her to me, he would restore my blighted happiness.

"The answer to this composition was indeed most unexpected — it was in person: in compliance with my wishes, his lordship led my mother into the study of Mr. Cameron, where I was benefiting by his instruction. The

surprise was too mighty for me — they thought it had terminated my existence. Oh that it had! But hold! mine is not the will to govern.

"When I did recover from the almost fatal effect of my joyful surprise, I found my gratitude to Lord Westhaven, for the precious treasure he had thus restored to me, had bound me to him by the strongest ties of affection.

"At length the time arrived for Lord and Lady Westhaven to take their departure from the hospitable roof of Mr. Cameron; when his lordship, to my great delight, found it would be a painful task, even for him, to part from me; and, therefore, he most unexpectedly determined that I should accompany him and my mother to London; and that my dear and excellent preceptor should follow us thither the moment he had made the necessary arrangements for a lengthened absence from his sister and from Annandale.

"On our arrival in London I was introduced to my brother, nearly seven years my junior — a beautiful, but a wayward child, and one who seemed born without affection;

for even his mother could not attach him; and of all things in creation I appeared, from the very hour in which we first beheld each other, the being of whom he strove most sedulously to evince a deeply rooted abhorrence — a sort of intuitive antipathy, which seemed also imbibed by his preceptor. In the latter, however, this probably arose from jealousy of the superior talents of Mr. Cameron, whom Lord Westhaven was fond of extolling for the methods he had adopted in the instruction and management of his pupils, or more probably still from the native malignity of a vicious heart. Alas! my poor brother! You will shudder for him whilst you read it — the preceptor of Lord Briarfield was — Ramirez!!!

"Yes, Fauconberg, Ramirez! He was then announced by his own arrangements as the *Abbé de Floriac*; but in fact Ramirez Escalona, an excommunicated canon from the cathedral of T———; the judicious selection of the Dowager Lady Westhaven as a successor to the matchless Cameron, when, in jealous frenzy, she sent him from his important

station of preceptor to her son, on his daring to reject her offered hand.

"You may have read of the monk of St. Lucar, who, turning his back to the altar, where he had been partaking of the consecrated bread, stabbed the object of his unhallowed passion. A disciple of this monk's practices, Ramirez, stabbed the virtuous object of his diabolical vengeance in his own confessional; for which dire crime he was excommunicated and banished — to the metropolis of England, where, upon the recommendation of the Italian master, who instructed the daughters of Lady Westhaven in singing, this sacrilegious assassin was elected to the important task of travelling preceptor to an amiable youth; from whose view he so judiciously managed to conceal his cloven foot, that when he ceased to require him in that capacity, his lordship appointed him his domestic chaplain; Ramirez having announced himself a proselyte from the errors of his own faith, to the religion of the church of England; and felt little repugnance, though not the man

on whom his own election would have fallen, to confide the care of Lord Briarfield's education, when the dowager made such her solemn request; upon the compliance with which her last blessing depended.

"The transition to me, from the simple comforts of Annandale, to the magnificent luxuries of a wealthy peer's town residence, was striking. But all the pomp by which I was surrounded was trifling, in competition with my proximity to my mother: yet I often felt sick at heart, through the demands her elevated situation had upon her time, since it left so little for me, to whom she was the whole world.

"I had been about a month in London, when Lord Westhaven received a letter from Mr. Cameron, announcing the death of his bailiff, in consequence of which he should be detained some weeks longer from his beloved pupil.

"His lordship had just finished reading this letter to my mother and me, at the breakfast board, where I always was admitted, when the Dowager Lady Westhaven was an-

nounced. Instantly my mother turned to the semblance of death; and trembled so excessively, that in terror I caught her hand, believing she was ill: but his lordship, too, grew pale; and in a half-disconcerted, half-melancholy tone, said: —

"'My life! you had better retire; but leave Xavier. I think he must make his way to her favour.'

"Even boy as I was, I felt shocked and indignant beyond expression, upon my angelic mother being thus degradingly sent from her own table, and by her own husband, at the approach of any one, where it was his duty to have supported her; and through the effervescence of my keenly wounded feelings, I would have fled after her, had not Lord Westhaven held me forcibly: yet he detained me with a cold and trembling hand.

"The dowager now appeared; and never had I before looked upon so haughty, so repulsive a countenance, as she wore at that moment.

"'So,' she exclaimed, on entering, 'I do

find you without that wretched woman. But, who is this boy? Not four and twenty hours since I arrived in town, yet reports have reached my ears; and lo! when I come hither to have them refuted, they meet me in full conviction. Say, infatuated man, is this he, whom you ought to bury in the bowels of the earth?'

"'This is Xavier Almedina, madam, whom I present to you as a candidate for your favour,' said Lord Westhaven.

"'Wretch!' her ladyship exclaimed, stamping her foot at me, 'leave my presence!—instantly leave it!'

"'My dear mother, I conjure you to recollect yourself! Consider your own dignity, and my feelings; and wound them not thus,' said Lord Westhaven, impressively.

"Her ladyship's violence now broke through all restraint; and, in the phrenzy of ungoverned fury, invoking every direful malediction to fall upon my mother, if I were not instantly, and for ever, banished from the roof of Lord Westhaven; and again stamping her foot at me,

imperiously commanded my absence—a command she had no further opportunity to reiterate; for in terror I fled to my chamber. The sound of her tremendous threat of malediction against my mother, rang in my ears; and believing, from the arbitrary violence of her conduct, that all the power was hers, and resistance not in her son, and that, therefore, my mother would become a prompt victim to her phrenzied wrath if I remained, I hastily and unadvisedly, actuated only by my filial alarms for my counsellors, put my ample store of money in my purse; and making up a portable parcel of linen, hastened to the hall.

"It was no very easy achievement to effect my escape from the house unnoticed by the porter; but I did contrive to conceal my bundle from the observation of this Cerberus, and made my way in a hackney coach to the inn, from whence I knew conveyances for Scotland daily set out.

"Arrived at the inn, and whilst waiting for the evening coach in which I was to embark for Annandale, I employed my time in writing

to Lord Westhaven. Addressing my mother, my bursting heart found impossible. I was then not under any guidance but that of impulse, and my wounded feelings influenced my pen. I wrote undauntedly, as the son of an angelic being, cruelly and wantonly insulted, to a husband who had not exerted himself in her behalf as his duty and affection called for; and not once considering the vast difference there existed between him and me, in years and situation, I concluded my letter of filial daring by informing him that I had fled from his lordship's house, to prevent the threats against my beloved mother from being carried into effect by the Dowager Lady Westhaven; who had never been so highly honoured, as when the pride and boast of the illustrious house of Verodia had condescended to enter her family.

"As to myself, I travelled in perfect security to the dwelling of my dear preceptor; whose consternation was excessive, on my unexpected and clandestine arrival: but his consternation faded into comparative calmness, when op-

posed to that I had created beneath the roof I had fled from. The porter of the inn, to whom I confided the delivery of my letter to Lord Westhaven, was faithful; and most fortunate it proved; for the immediate inquiries at the inn, relative to the coach I had set out in, lulled much apprehension for my safety; but did not prevent the prompt despatch of a courier to trace my progress, to ascertain the certainty of my safety, and to send back to town expresses as he advanced, to appease the maternal agonies of my mother and the anxiety of Lord Westhaven.

"My letter wrung the heart of Lord Westhaven, yet did not offend him; but it unfortunately led his lordship to serious expostulation with his mother, and ended in a new altercation, which eventually sent Lord and Lady Westhaven once more from England.

"I had earnestly implored Mr. Cameron to confide in me, 'why the Dowager Lady Westhaven had treated me so contemptuously; and why she had caused my being degradingly

turned from her son's roof, the alternative of her most horrible denunciations?'

"The good and kind heart of Mr. Cameron suggested a reply that satisfied me, relative to the Dowager; but, upon the conduct of Lord Westhaven in the matter, he was silent; and as I felt I could never more love him, who did not support the dignity of his wife, and suffered any one to disturb her happiness, I became more reconciled to my sad lot in separation from my mother; and to prevent my afflicted mind from dwelling reprehensibly upon my singularly forlorn situation, I devoted myself, with redoubled diligence, to the precious instructions of my dear preceptor, by which means I entered college a full year earlier than Lord Westhaven had expected; and, much pleased at the circumstance, his lordship addressed affectionate letters to me from Ireland, where he then was, desiring to see me during my first academic vacation.

"Much as I mentally resented the conduct of Lord Westhaven, relative to my mother and his own, I could not resist the transport

of seeing my adored parent; and to Dublin in due time I repaired, preceded by the good report of my college tutor: for it had been my firm purpose, from the moment I had power to form any train of rational ideas, that my conduct should never prove the source of any serious uneasiness to my beloved mother.

"This favourable *preludium* obtained for me the most gracious and affectionate reception from Lord Westhaven. From my mother I expected a reception from the heart of tenderness, and was not disappointed: but Lord Westhaven's surprised me, for it was touchingly affectionate; and in it was a flattering feature continually betraying itself, in appearing proud of the affinity which my being son to his wife had created.

"Lord Briarfield and the Abbé de Floriac were in Dublin; and the same abhorrence which marked the manner of both to me on a former occasion, was still conspicuous: yet, notwithstanding all their confederation to torment and mortify me, I was so happy in

Dublin, and became so attached to Lord Westhaven, that it was with deep regret I found the period approach which demanded my attendance at *Alma Mater;* when, to my great joy, the same regret operating upon his lordship, he suddenly determined that my mother's *accouchement*, which was not far distant, should take place in London.

"It accordingly did so; and Alvina Dudley drew her first breath in the metropolis of England. Yes, Albert, the sweet, the lovely, the inestimable being whom it has been your fate to see, and love—but I will not anticipate the dire calamities which she, pure innocent, was born to undergo.

"I had embraced my sister, Albert, and had sworn to the helpless interesting candidate for tenderness and affection, 'That, next to our mother, she should be my heart's idol, ere I returned to Cambridge.'"

CHAPTER XII.

"My next vacation being at Christmas, I was invited by Lord Westhaven to pass it with him at his hunting lodge, in ——shire; and desiring me to cross the country to him, and to postpone seeing my mother and sister until on my return to Cambridge, I felt a great alloy in my expectation of happiness: an alloy, that was indeed considerable, when I found Lord Briarfield and his tutor of the party; and that the dowager's country residence was close in our vicinity: a circumstance, which, had I been aware of, would have withheld me from accepting his lordship's invitation, as there was little doubt why my beloved mother had been left to a solitary Christmas in London.

"Some academic honours which I had acquired, through my industry, seemed to have drawn the bands which bound me to the heart

of Lord Westhaven still closer, and to draw the heart of my brother still further from fraternal unison.

"With bitter agony of grief, Lord Westhaven deplored to me the ignorance and evil propensities of his son, the morning after my arrival at the lodge.

"'For pity's sake, Xavier,' he added, as affecting tears gushed from his eyes, 'win Briarfield's love; and, if possible, make him like yourself.'

"'My lord, I replied, place him with Mr. Cameron: he reared you, and that stamps his capability; whilst all that in me claims your approbation I owe to him.'

"Lord Westhaven clasped me to his bosom in an agony of emotion; pressed me there with convulsive energy, which powerfully affected me; and then holding me at a little distance from him, cast a look of bitter anguish on me, as he faintly articulated—'Oh, my poor boy, forgive me!' and rushed from the room, leaving me strangely subdued by his parental sorrow, for the unworthiness of his

son; whose forgiveness he seemed to me thus pathetically to invoke, for having committed him to the care of one so incompetent to the important task.

"At this moment Lord Briarfield, in full and painful testimony of how superlative was his worthlessness, crawled from under a covered table; and flying up to me, aimed a blow at my face, which the great difference in our height prevented from taking effect, at the same time exclaiming: —

"'So, you advised that drivelling fool to place me under that infernal Scotch sawney! If he takes your cursed advice, I'll either cut his throat or yours.'

"Perfectly terror-stricken at his wickedness, I stood motionless, until a second attempt to strike me, aroused my faculties to action; when, seizing his lordship by both hands, I exclaimed: —

"'Were my disposition like yours, I would, as I have the power, chastise you as you merit: but go, child, I will not make use of my power to hurt you. I would win your

love, if that were possible; and I would have you the pupil of a good man, that he might lead you to become a comfort to your parents.'

"The incorrigible boy now commenced a tremendous howl of phrenzied passion, as the Dowager Lady Westhaven glided in between us.

"'Briarfield,' she said, 'I have been an unobserved witness of this to you most degrading scene. Your intemperate passion I could much sooner pardon, than your despicable meanness in becoming an intentional eavesdropper; and well may you blush to think how this young person has the advantage of you in nobility of soul.' She now looked up at me, then at her howling grandson; and, to my utter amazement, sank into a seat, and went off into a violent hysteric affection.

"I flew for a glass of water, and ordered Lord Westhaven to be summoned; and scarcely had I returned with the water, when his lordship appeared; who, conceiving an encounter with me had caused this indis-

position in his mother, much wondered at seeing her drinking water, presented by my hand."

"'What is the matter, dearest madam?' he demanded in alarm.

"'Why, that rascally son of my mother has almost torn my arms from my body!' exclaimed Lord Briarfield; 'and grandmamma hearing my piteous shrieks, and seeing his barbarity, fell into fits.'

"'Unworthy heir of a noble house,' said the sobbing dowager, 'add not untruths to your other debasing misdemeanors. Oh! my son, my son! what bitter—bitter compunction is in store for you!'

"I now felt it my duty to retire, and leave them without witnesses to the overflowings of their agitated feelings; and I saw his lordship no more that day; for upon the departure of the dowager from the lodge, accompanied by Lord Briarfield and the impostor Abbé, Lord Westhaven sent me a few lines, couched in the most affectionate terms, but stating, 'that the conduct of his unworthy

boy had so unhinged him, he found himself compelled to avoid all society that day; and, most of all, mine.'

"When we met the subsequent day, I perceived that this unfortunate father's night had been sleepless, and that his spirits were depressed by care; yet to me his manner was touchingly kind; and often I caught him gazing on me, with looks of mournful wildness, that would have amazed and alarmed me, had I not ascribed it to parental anguish relative to the unamiable disposition of his son; but to offer any consolation, or attempt any allusions to the sad subject of his distress, was inadmissible; and all I could accomplish to evince my sympathy, was, to devise every thing within my power to beguile his dejected mind of its afflicting theme; but soon I found, the more my affectionate attentions interested him, the sadder he became; and ascribing this distressing effect to the sorrowful belief 'that however he might suffer from mental cares, his own child would not thus tenderly sympathize:' and recoiling from an appearance of

such invidious contrast, I inwardly rejoiced when a neighbouring baronet arrived, and prevailed upon his lordship to accompany him to a county meeting.

"Left to myself, I set out on an equestrian expedition; and at length emerged from a woodland, upon a small common, bounded by a steep declivity on one side, which on its part was terminated by a rapid mill race.

"Here I sauntered, to give my horse breath after a smart gallop, and to admire a beautiful prospect even in its leafless state; when suddenly I beheld a coach issue from a wooded lane, and enter upon a road deviating from that I was pacing. The attendant domestic I saw was on the box with the coachman, but the coach was accompanied by two horsemen —or rather a man and youth, the latter of whom I promptly identified as my hopeful brother; and bending my eyes in mournful thoughtfulness after him, I saw an ass start up out of some furze, where it had been recumbent, and on the moment set up a tremendous braying, which altogether so terrified

the poor boy's steed, that it set off in the wild speed of ungovernable dismay.

"Instantly perceiving that my brother's companion meditated no exertion to aid him; that the boy himself was unable to control the terrified animal; and that the course he was taking was for Lord Briarfield's destruction, I darted forward from the commanding point I was in; but did not reach him until the horse had plunged into the stream, and thrown off his light burden, who was rapidly rushing to the mill's destructive machinery, when, with some difficulty, I snatched him from a certain and dreadful death.

"His grandmother and two sisters, Ladies Camilla and Emma Dudley — the twin-daughters of Lord Westhaven by a former marriage — had been in the coach; but, upon the horse taking fright, they alighted in alarm; and as they filled the air with their wild shrieks, they had an uninterrupted view of Lord Briarfield's peril and rescue. Having delivered the object of their well-founded apprehensions safe and unhurt to them, as

they had a gentleman of their party, besides attendants to afford any further necessary assistance, I made my bow, and galloped off; neither waiting for thanks, nor for an imperious mandate to be gone; and hastened to the lodge, to throw off my wet clothes, and dress for dining at Stanlake Abbey, the seat of Sir Edwin Riversdale, the baronet whom Lord Westhaven had accompanied to the county meeting.

"At length I arrived at Stanlake Abbey, little anticipating that I was there to encounter a peril much more menacing than that I had just escaped. During my late Cambridge term I had been accidentally led to afford assistance to two young ladies, who were out riding, attended by an inebriated groom, and performed their safe escort to the house of the father of one of them. The other lady, a visitor, and about one year my junior, and whom I thought — in short, I thought too much of her; which soon became manifest to my tutor, by its obvious effect upon my studies for the remainder of the term. But this fasci-

nator only being a visitor in the neighbourhood, I could not discover her name; as from the gentleman, whose daughter I had also relieved from the embarrassment of the insolence and obstinacy of a sottish attendant, I received only a handsome letter of thanks upon the subject.

"The fascinating image of the lovely stranger was, however, fading on my vision, when most unexpectedly I found her as the only child of Sir Edwin Riversdale, and heiress to his immense possessions. The surprise of Miss Riversdale was equal to my own, on meeting; and with affecting, yet animated grace, she presented me to her fond father, 'as the champion of damsels in distress.'

"The reception given me by Sir Edwin, as the friend of Lord Westhaven, had been polite and cordial; but now, gratitude for the service I had rendered his idol, seemed at once to transform me into an old friend; since from that very hour, until my sad destiny severed us for ever, his address to me became, 'My dear boy!'

"'My dear boy!' he said, in the moment after his lovely Ellen announced me as her Cambridgeshire champion; 'my dear boy! Lord Westhaven will be here in a few moments. He is just sending off an express to the Dowager Lady Westhaven, with inquiries after his son, who, my people have heard, fell into a mill-race; where he must have been crushed to atoms, had it not been for the intrepidity of his cousin, Mr. Hillsborough, who plunged into the stream, and saved him at the hazard of his own life.'

"I changed colour, which passed current for sentimental feeling — my surprise being infinite — as I could scarcely suppose that the luckless wight could have fallen twice, in one morning, into millstreams; and that the automaton I had mentally railed at, could have been the Mr. Hillsborough the dowager plumed herself upon having reared.

"At length Lord Westhaven appeared, and in consequence of his son's unamiable conduct to me the preceding day, delicately forbore to express to me his parental feelings upon the

escape of his child; whilst I, through consciousness, was silent on the subject, to the amazement of the whole party.

"During dinner Sir Edwin talked much of Lord Briarfield's escape, and of the intrepidity of Mr. Hillsborough; and at length added, with a smile: —

"'What say you, Ellen? Do you not think this incident will improve poor Hillsborough's chance with a certain heiress? You are silent —but that blush is eloquent.'

"The bright blush of the beautiful Ellen brought forth a different banner on my face; for if I might draw an inference from the pang of dismay that shot through my heart, my cheek was deadly pale.

"After dinner, Sir Edwin proposed the gallant Hillsborough's health in a bumper, which all the party acceded to, save Miss Riversdale; who, to my infinite rapture, declined, saying, with a sweet smile of animated archness: —

"'But if this formidable mill-race turns not out the ancle-bath-stream at the Grange,

I'll drink a pint bumper for you in penitence.'

"I thought she had never looked so beautiful as at that moment.

"The gentlemen who formed our party being temperate, we soon joined the ladies in the drawing-room; and scarcely had we done so, when a letter from the dowager was delivered to Lord Westhaven, by a servant, who announced to his lordship, 'that the man who had attended the carriage when the accident had befallen Lord Briarfield, had been sent over from the Grange, to answer any question his lordship might wish to ask.'

"'Come, come,' exclaimed Sir Edwin, 'let us have the man here, to treat you with a cup of wine instead of tea, Ellen.'

"Lord Westhaven by this time had read his letter. 'It is from the gallant knight-errant himself,' said his lordship; 'for my mother and my daughters have been too much subdued by their alarm of the morning, to hold a pen. Yet, he mentions the accident as one of little consequence.'

"At this moment the servant from the Grange entered, and I turned into the recess of a window, to admire the moonbeams on a lake.

"All the questions of his lordship relative to the health of his son being satisfactorily answered, Sir Edwin demanded 'where the accident occurred, and how Mr. Hillsborough had managed the rescue of Lord Briarfield?'

"'He manage it, sir! Why, he never so much as moved hand or foot, or horse's hoof, to save him. The poor young lord might have perished for him, or indeed for any of us; for the coachman and I being on the box, had no power of making any attempt to save him. Oh, no, sir! the rescue was left to a total stranger, who from a much greater distance saw the accident; and, like an arrow from a bow, went plump into the race to save my lord.'

"'A stranger!' exclaimed the agitated father.

"'An utter stranger. Not one of these parts, my lord.'

"'Was he a gentleman? Describe the circumstance;' faintly articulated Lord Westhaven.

"The man's description not only of my exploit, but of my person, soared so high in the superlative, that my face became glewed to the window.

"Fauconberg, you will deem me a contemptible coxcomb, for even adverting to such trifles: but forgive me. I touched upon the circumstance, to add force to the moral of my story. If the lamp burnt brightly, it was soon extinguished. Yes, Albert, I was like the meteor of fleeting brilliancy, belonging to no planetary system; that floats awhile in resplendence, then sinks to nought, without one stay from Nature."

CHAPTER XIII.

"The man had scarcely ceased his portraiture of the hero his enthusiasm dubbed me, ere I was drawn from my retreat by the tremulous hand of Lord Westhaven.

"'Was the stranger, of whom you speak, resembling this young gentleman?' demanded his lordship, in convulsive agitation, drawing me forth, most reluctantly, to observation.

"'It is he himself, my lord; the actual deliverer of your son from a certain and cruel death,' the man replied.

"His lordship fell upon my neck, so overpowered by emotion, that it became necessary to convey him to a chamber, and summon medical assistance. For three weeks his serious indisposition detained him at Stanlake Abbey, where I was kindly and cordially invited to remain; and had it not been that I felt so keenly hurt and offended at Lord West-

haven's not permiting me to summon my mother, or even to announce his illness to her, I should have conceived myself in Paradise. A mutual passion sprang up in the heart of the heavenly Ellen and your friend; which Sir Edwin, promptly perceiving, encouraged, by often rallying us upon our most evident predilection for each other's society; and sometimes adding, seriously—

"'Well, my dear boy, get on with the Greek and Latin at *Alma Mater*, and we will see what can be done here. If you have not many of the Spanish ducats to produce, we have British acres, and British guineas, which will do as well.'

"During Lord Westhaven's detention at Stanlake Abbey, the Dowager often visited her son; and was so far subdued by what she termed 'my Christian conduct to my foe,' as to tolerate my remaining in the same room with her; and even, at times, she narrowly escaped being civil to me. The Ladies Dudley, very lovely girls of eighteen, daily visited their father also, until the Dowager

discovered that they both unbent in too much cordiality towards me; and that Lady Camilla evinced anxiety for my society; when she flew off with her charge to Bath, whither Mr. Hillsborough was obliged to accompany them.

"Mr. Hillsborough's mother had been the Dowager's favourite daughter, who, having united herself to a portionless spendthrift, without the precaution of securing her own fortune to her progeny, Mr. Hillsborough's chief dependence was upon his grandmother, who had long meditated an union between him and the lovely heiress of Stanlake Abbey; but Ellen Riversdale was not to be won by so heartless a being; and ere my Cambridge term summoned me from ———shire, I was her accepted lover, with the full approbation of her father and my mother.

"Lord Westhaven's illness, and my attraction there, had detained me so long in ——— shire, that I could only pass a few hours on my way to Cambridge with my beloved mother, whom, with grief, I found looking ill and dejected; but she made no acknowledgment of

mental or bodily suffering to my alarmed inquiries.

"My little darling, Alvina, I found healthy and growing into perfect beauty; yet, strange to say, her father did not seem to regard her; and, stranger still, it appeared to me as if I were the monopolizer of all his affectionate interest, save what he bestowed upon my beautiful mother, as a yet devoted lover.

"When arrived at Cambridge, the desire of Sir Edwin sounded in my ears at every turn, like a perpetual monitor; and I did get on with my Greek and Latin, as the glorious prize in view was Ellen Riversdale.

"Easter recurred late that year; and, shallow mortal, I almost quarrelled with time for its tardy measure; for I thought Easter never would arrive, until I might take wing, in panting anxiety, to see my mother and my Ellen. The former I feared, by the tone of her letters, was still dispirited; and the latter I knew was in London, arrived there to be presented; and the presentation of my mother I conjectured would occur at the same period—an event

which had not hitherto taken place, on account of her residence abroad.

"My Ellen I found, at length, in high health and beauty; and my diligence at Cambridge, and the good report from thence, so delighted Sir Edwin, that he voluntarily promised to bestow his idolized child upon me the day I became of age. This promise raised my joyful spirits to a buoyancy of wildness, that required the sombre shades of my home to mellow, for there I beheld my beloved mother, pale and dejected, without any apparent cause, except in the visibly altered temper of her husband; though to her, in the midst of all his bursts of peevish irritation, his tenderness of attachment was still predominant. Yet it seemed not happy attachment, as I had been accustomed to behold it; and often I heard his lordship execrate fate with bitterness, for having ordained an honour lately conferred upon him by an appointment at court, as it detained him in town, when it was evident his beloved wife required the salubrious air of the country.

"At length the day drew near for the drawing-room, at which the Ladies Dudley, as well as Miss Riversdale, were to be presented; and I began to marvel at hearing nothing in our house of preparation for the presentation of my mother; yet something always occurred to prevent my asking those questions relative to this event, which often hovered on my lips.

"That perpetual pacer, time, had diminished the intervening days to two only ere the drawing-room was to be held, when, as we were seated at breakfast, intelligence arrived of the Dowager Lady Westhaven's dwelling being in flames. Lord Westhaven and myself flew on the moment to the scene of conflagration; and dreadful indeed it proved — the immediate supply of water in that street having been suspended through necessary repairs.

"We found the Ladies Camilla and Emma in the street, before the flaming mansion, safe and unhurt, but wildly shrieking for their grandmother; who, at much peril, had emerged from her dressing-room, and accompanying them in their rescue, when unfortunately recol-

lecting her casket of jewels, just brought home for the drawing-room, had rushed back, and the rapidly augmenting flames had cut off her return.

"The rapture of Lord Westhaven on finding his children in safety, now turned to agony not to be described. I thought of my own feelings were my mother in the same peril; and, upon one glance more at his lordship, I rushed rashly into a scene which even the professional firemen recoiled from; but Providence was my invulnerable shield. I succeeded in snatching the Dowager from the spot where, for some moments, she had been seen in frantic, hopeless despair, delivered her safely to the firemen to bear down, and, by that time, found all that was left for my escape was the desperation of a leap into a blanket held out to receive me.

"The Dowager and her grand-daughters were promptly borne to the house of Lord Westhaven in the adjoining square, when the scorches, bruises, and consequent illness of the Dowager confined her to her bed beneath the

roof of her daughter-in-law; and thus, for the first time, the Ladies Dudley became residents in their father's house since his second marriage.

"As it had not immediately transpired by whom the Dowager had been rescued, nothing impeded my throwing off every appearance of the tremendous service I had been engaged in, ere I presented myself before my mother and my Ellen; for although I could yield them ocular demonstration of my perfect safety, I yet hoped to have spared their susceptibility that agitation a knowledge of the peril I had braved I knew would awaken; as the firemen were unacquainted with my name, and the Dowager Lady Westhaven, although perfectly aware by whom she had been rescued, I considered the last person in existence, save her grandson, who would acknowledge an obligation to me.

"But in this supposition I proved unjust to her ladyship; for, after my return from a long visitation to my Ellen, a scene of strongly excited sensibility awaited me at Lord West-

haven's. The Dowager, the instant she had recovered from her dreadful terrors sufficiently to be equal to the task, informed her son to whom, under Providence, he was indebted for the preservation of his mother; and in those moments of glowing gratitude not only desired to see me, but received my mother to her arms as a daughter.

"The day, the to me eventful day, of the pending drawing-room arrived; and I beheld my Ellen in the magnificence of her court attire; and though lovely to fascination she appeared, that which my heart dwelt upon with the most ardent rapture was, the simplicity of mind which beamed through all the splendour of her adornments.

"As the delighted parent and lover gazed upon this perfect work of nature, Sir Edwin said, with an affectionate smile, 'Your next presentation, my child, will be as a lovely bride; and our dear Xavier will then bear his part in individual adornment.'

"Shortly after I handed my Ellen, my affianced bride, to her carriage, and I pressed

her hand — unconscious wretch! — I pressed it for the last time."

IN CONTINUATION.

"I fear, my dear Fauconberg, that the remainder of my melancholy narrative will have to plead for even more allowances from your kindness than the foregoing part. The reminiscence of griefs like mine can scarcely preserve a collected mind for composition.

"I returned to Lord Westhaven's in full expectation of beholding my lovely mother in her magnificent attire; but, to my utter amazement, I found his lordship only and the Ladies Dudley arrayed for court; and ere I could sufficiently recover my surprise, Lady Emma exclaimed —

"'I do wish you were a married lady, Mr. Almedina, to extricate my poor sister and me from our present difficulty. Nothing but dis-

appointment upon disappointment relative to *chaperons*. First, grandmamma disappointed us for the purpose of showing papa that you would go through *fire* and *water* for his family; then our next resource has, within these two hours, lost her daughter; and the present lady in waiting has unluckily had a serious *brouillerie* with grandmamma; and so we are compelled now to have scouts out in every direction, looking about the world for a proper *chaperon* to introduce us.'

" 'I should have thought,' I replied, with a haughty air, and darting a reproachful glance at Lord Westhaven, whom I beheld now pale and the semblance of despair, which softened the asperity of my tones, 'I should have imagined, Lady Emma, your proper *chaperon* could be promptly found. Lord Westhaven's wife, in my humble opinion, would have been the *chaperon*, most proper of all others, for presenting the daughters of her husband to the consort of their Sovereign.'

" My mother had arisen from her seat in evident agitation; and now, with a counte-

nance blanched to the hue of death, rushed from the room.

"In apprehension of her indisposition I was flying after her; but ere I could accomplish my anxious exit, the magnitude of the room caused my hearing the diabolical laugh of her degenerate son, Lord Briarfield, and his utterance of—

"'Why, she dare not present herself before the Queen. Our Queen admits no such personages to her presence.'

"My indignation would have arrested my flight to chastise the unnatural monster, had not alarm for my mother led me on; but I saw chastisement fall on him from a more appropriate hand—his almost frenzied father felled him to the ground.

"Fleet as I was, I did not overtake Lady Westhaven until the moment of our mutual entrance of her dressing-room, when some sudden sort of horror seemed all at once to seize me. I closed the door, and placed my back against it for support, unable to advance one single step, as I wildly articulated—

"'For the mercy of Heaven, explain all this to me, my mother! Oh, my mother!'

"These piteous words arrested the further flight of Lady Westhaven, who turned and sank at my feet. Yes, sank on her knees — on her knees to her own child, as she hid her head in the grasp which convulsively bound her to me; and lowly and tremulously articulated —

"'Forgive, forgive, oh! my child, the penitent wretch before you!'

"Oh, Fauconberg! my friend, my friend! What are racks and tortures — what, in the inventive cruelties of barbarism, could strike such anguish to the bleeding heart of filial agony, as beholding thus a being, suddenly degraded from an angel's purity, on her very knees, suing for the forgiveness of her own offspring?

"'What mean you, my own mother?' I wildly cried, as I endeavoured to snatch her from her degrading position; but with a frame too much convulsed to effect a purpose which she, dear, dear humiliated suppliant, struggled

to oppose. "Oh, speak to me, my own mother! and tell me why I am doomed to behold you on your knees to your own adoring child?'

"'Forgive me! forgive me!' became her sole wild cry, as now, with the suddenly inspired strength of desperation, I raised her to my palpitating heart, and fled with her into her chamber, when on her bed I laid her, who I found had fainted in my arms; and as I was rushing to seek restoratives, Lord Westhaven intercepted my progress with the discordant death-note, 'My child! forgive me!' as he sunk upon my neck in an agony of bitter, bitter tears.

"'Forgive you, my lord!' I exclaimed, in the faltering accents of paralyzed apprehension. 'What of horror does all this portend? Why, oh! why did my mother, my own angelic mother, sue to me for pardon? And why do you? Speak! Tell me! whilst I have life to hear you.'

"'The sad, sad secret has been revealed to your cruel brother; as yet, I know not how,

and by him to the household; and ——— but, oh! Xavier, forgive the guilty man before you! Pride of your wretched father's heart and house you would have been, but for my fatal transgression. Xavier, you are my son!'

"In horror I recoiled from my own parent. In horror I flung him from me; and rushing to my mother, clasped her lifeless form to my throbbing bosom as the piteous victim of man's perfidy; then wildly laid her down again, as in the anguish of despair I cried —

"'Tell me, my lord, at once tell me, am I the offspring of yourself and this lifeless wreck of innocence and beauty? Say it quickly — the offspring of dishonour?'

"Lord Westhaven hid his face with both his palsied hands, as he threw himself in an agony of grief and shame by the inanimate form of my mother, as he articulated the low and hollow death-knell to my happiness;

"'Yes, ill-fated child of my fond affection, you are the illegitimate offspring of your sinning parents.'

"A sea of ice seemed at once to encompass

my heart! a lake of fire to pour down its burning torrents on my brain; and such were the last sensations I was conscious of in that moment of my desolated happiness. In about eight months after I awoke to a bitter sense of my calamity; and the first dawning of reason unfolded my own sad state to me. For, manacled upon a bed of straw, and weak as a new-born infant, could I, alas! doubt the nature of my visitation?

"Ah! Albert! in that interval of my suspended reason the mourning world lost its fairest ornament. My Ellen, first informed by her almost distracted father that she must relinquish every thought of me, as I was illegitimate; and then, without any tender preparation of humanity, told by the exulting savage Hillsborough, 'that my light of reason was extinguished for ever,' sunk beneath the united shock."

CHAPTER XIV.

"And now, my friend, the humiliating task is mine to impart the history of my hapless parents ere that period of which I have already treated.

"You of course have heard, that prior to the French revolution, the education of no man of fashion was pronounced complete until he had performed the grand tour of Europe. The young Lord Westhaven consequently set out for this final polish under the protection of the Abbé de Floriac, who, so far from shrinking from a return to his native country, volunteered his services for the purpose; depending for security upon his change of name, of country, and of dress; upon the good luck which had hitherto shielded him from well-earned punishment; and upon that secret, though supreme power which heretofore had regulated

the sentences pronounced against his enormous crimes.

"But ere the departure of Lord Westhaven for the Continent, his mother's speculations for a matrimonial alliance she had much at heart for him, were so far carried into effect, that proposals were made in his name to the guardians of a wealthy heiress, when a verbal negotiation was entered into for the union to take place on his lordship's return to England, provided the affections of neither party presented a negative on their re-meeting: a negative which Lady Westhaven resolved should not be presented on the part of her son, if she could possibly prevent it. Her ladyship, therefore, promised a large reward to the venal abbé, should he, by judicious management in preventing any serious attachment of the young peer, bring him back heart-whole to ratify his conditional engagement; since to her it was a matter of great importance that her son should form this wealthy alliance.

"Alas! my dear Albert, it is grief and

humiliation to a susceptible heart to have in truth but little to relate in commendation of one's own kindred. The Dowager Lady Westhaven was one of those indefatigable votaries of Cupid and Hymen, who, in homage at their shrines, volunteer on even till the closing hour of life. After the violently resented rejection of the unambitious Cameron, her ladyship's next profession of attachment was not to a son of honour, not to a gentleman — in fact to the friend, the confederate of Ramirez! the master whom she employed to instruct her daughters in singing! And knowing full well that the late Lord Westhaven, through uxorious infatuation, had left the whole of his son's revenue, during his minority, under the sole and uncontrolled management of his mother, the signore sunk the impediment of a living wife, and most joyfully accepted her ladyship's offered hand; though given in secrecy, and to remain a secret gift until the majority of the young peer, and her consequent emancipation from her most lucrative guardianship, should permit her to accom-

pany her melodious spouse to his native country as his acknowledged wife.

"But scarcely had this degrading marriage taken place when the legitimate wife appeared. The sums called for to preserve this now annulled marriage a profound secret from the world required additional wealth; and in the very moment this imprudent woman found to her utter dismay that the confident of her marriage, the abbé, whom she had been lured into trusting, was as unprincipled as the signore himself, she found herself compelled to commit her only son to his care; for she had by her own disgraceful conduct given the designing Floriac full ascendency over her future actions, and to save herself from stigma, was forced to submit to him as to her fate.

"Amongst other parts of Europe, Lord Westhaven most calamitously visited Madrid, where, at a bull-fight, he first beheld the exquisitely beautiful Alvina de Verodia, then just entering her fifteenth year. She was but a short time returned from Santa Barbara, where she had been educated under the auspices

of one of the most highly gifted and estimable of womankind, her aunt, Donna Ellena de Verodia, then prioress of that monastery.

"The parents of Alvina de Verodia were deceased; and from her fourth year she had been left to the guardianship of her brothers, Don Ferdinand, whom you encountered in the valley of Santa Barbara; and Don Stefano, a wild and dissipated being. Don Ferdinand being passionately devoted to the national delight of the bull-fight, naturally conceived his young sister would find equal charms in that savage sport, and took her to the highly prized spectacle; but her gentle nature was feminine in its sweetest form of pity and humanity; and ere the first *picador* had been unhorsed, subdued by feeling, she fainted in the arms of her astonished brother.

"The throng of spectators at this savage scene was immense, and with difficulty Don Ferdinand effected the removal of his swooning charge, but not without very essential aid from a stranger in the multitude, in fact Lord Westhaven, who undauntedly encountered much

peril from the infuriated antagonist of the discomfited *picador* to afford safe convoy to the too lovely and interesting Alvina.

"From the assistance thus chivalrously afforded by his lordship, an acquaintance with the brothers of Alvina commenced; and soon Lord Westhaven and Don Stefano became inseparable.

"Don Ferdinand at this unfortunate juncture had just been elected *cortéjo* to a celebrated beauty of Madrid upon her marriage, and was, therefore, seldom at home. The duenna of his sister bore a character renowned for sanctity; and the family confessor, Father Sancho Torquemada, a pattern of austere piety, passing much of his precious time in the edifying society of the devout duenna Mariana, Don Ferdinand consequently believed that all things were perfectly correct and secure relative to the care of his sister in his house; but, by a sad fatality, the duenna of poor Donna Alvina was only superficially devout; and was, alas! an old *cortejoe* of the pretended Abbé de Floriac, and his most devoted satellite.

"That part of the private history and views of the demon Ramirez Escalona with which I am acquainted, I learned from a devout and guileless priest of the Catholic persuasion, with whom my subsequent griefs led me to form almost a friendship in Spain, partly from his own knowledge, and partly through the communications of a babbling agent and confident of Ramirez in many of his heinous practices.

"This inestimable Father José, since dead, informed me, 'that the advantage of a most liberal education had been given to Ramirez by his parents; but possibly from being a native of Ecija, a place renowned for the turpitude of its inhabitants, the seeds of his villany were inherent, or at least early imbibed from association with kindred or townsmen, who shrank from no species of enormity.' But at all events, however he came by his evil propensities, he had them in abundance; and daring you will acknowledge him in the path of crime, when you find him as a daily guest in the house of Don Ferdinand de Verodia in Madrid as the Abbé de Floriac, when I

tell you that it had been the lovely and accomplished sister of that haughty Don whom he had immolated.

"Unfortunately for my hapless mother, she then only eleven years of age, and devotedly attached to her sister, had strayed into the church of Santa Barbara, to await the return of her heart's idol from confession. She therefore heard her sister's last shriek — her last groan; and beheld the atrocious monster rush, with his bleeding dagger, from the pitiless immolation of this lovely innocent: her wild cries led to the instant pursuit and apprehension of the murderer; and her clear, though heart-rending, evidence, must have led him to condign punishment, had it not been for the supreme, though invisible, power which so inexplicably protected him against public indignation, — and all the exertions of the ancient house of Verodia. As it was, he escaped with the irrevocable disgrace of the *san benito* flung across his shoulders for a few moments, and banishment from Spain for a definite period.

"But no waters of oblivion did Ramirez find in the land where he took refuge; since never, for one moment, did he cease to pant for revenge upon the whole house of Verodia; and more especially upon the innocent young witness, who had led him to such eternal disgrace, and on whose individual head he had sworn to wreak the most deadly vengeance; and, to his black heart, the treasured memory of the vindictive vow proved indeed congenial.

"To revisit Madrid, under such circumstances of disguise, was most consonant to the never-fading wish of vengeance cherished by Ramirez. Madrid not having been the scene of his sanguinary deed, or of his trial, he relied upon finding few to recognise him there; especially as he was fully equal to perform the character he was to appear in, through his proficiency as an universal linguist, and his perfect knowledge of the bearings of a spruce French Abbé; and, strange as you may conceive it, Fauconberg, he then had no exterior defects to impede his passing current; for, when even my misery commenced of knowing him, he

could boast polished insinuating manners, and a countenance rather prepossessing.

"But sin, like time, will leave its legible traces as it advances. The miscreant associates, with whom Ramirez has passed his latter days, have brutalized him; and, like his counterpart, Garcias,* of whom we lately read together, a face wound, in his nefarious practices, caused that distortion of countenance, and obliquity of glance, which made so indelible an impression upon our poor friend Dermod.

"By an unfortunate coincidence, Father Sancho, recoiling from the baleful society of the young English heretic, retired to the *cortijo* belonging to his cathedral, at some distance from Madrid; and Don Stefano was, most unexpectedly, compelled to fly from the metropolis, in consequence of an affair of honour, which he had believed blown over. But the inquisitorial menace had been now revived, no doubt through the machina-

* See Romance of the Pyrenees, — first published in 1802.

tions of the austere Sancho Torquemada, to withdraw the volatile Stefano from his pernicious intimacy with a heretic. But why, oh! why was not the young Alvina withdrawn from the influence of that formidable being? No; through some strange fatality, the stern confessor relied upon the prudence of the sanctified duenna.

"I cannot enter upon the particulars of my hapless mother's degradation; but not fifteen, and her guardian angels slept, unmindful of their charge, when they calamitously consigned her to such protection.

"You, Albert, who are acquainted with the manners and customs of Spain, know with what facility access can be obtained to the morning sitting room of the females of families; and, in fact, you cannot wonder, under the auspices of dame Mariana and Ramirez, at the dire catastrophe —— my mother's shame and my father's dishonour."

IN CONTINUATION.

"It now became the plan of the pitiless Ramirez, to complete his project of revenge upon my unfortunate mother, by drawing Lord Westhaven from Madrid; lest strong attachment, the voice of honour, or the interference of an infuriated brother, should intervene, to cause an union by a sacred tie; he, therefore, arranged the arrival of an express, apparently from her ladyship's physician, announcing Lady Westhaven at the point of death, and requesting her son to set out for England without delay, to receive her last blessing.

"Ramirez had anticipated the prompt obedience of Lord Westhaven to this summons, but not the accompaniment which compelled his departure from Madrid to be that of secret flight; leaving a few lines for the Abbé de Floriac, requesting him to proceed to London, where he would find his fugitive pupil.

"My hapless mother, lured, by the voice of love, from that home which love had led

her to dishonour, fled with Lord Westhaven; under the firm conviction that, whilst flying from the dreaded anger, and too possible vengeance of her brothers, she was hastening to the sacred altar in England, to become the wife of her fascinating lover.

"Ramirez was too great an adept in the art of plotting, not to have given notice to the Dowager Lady Westhaven of the nature of the lure, by which he hoped to draw her son from an alarming infatuation at Madrid; so that Lord Westhaven found his mother in a darkened room, in her bed, performing the dying woman, when he arrived in London; and where Ramirez arrived at the same moment, supplied with every calumny, that the inventive turpitude of the duenna Mariana had fabricated for his purpose; not only against the connubial constancy of the Spanish ladies, but against the innocent Alvina herself, and her immaculate sister, Zamira.

"These anecdotes, apparently well authenticated, well-timed, and well told, were aided by the maternal influence possessed by Lady

Westhaven over the mind of her son; and, alas! their demoniac arts took effect.

"Fauconberg, the subject is agonizing! I cannot arrange for you all the machinery of the diabolical plot:—but Alvina was forsaken! Lord Westhaven fulfilled the engagement entered into for him by his mother."

CHAPTER XV.

"UNDER the conviction, inspired by the diabolical Abbé, of Alvina being, in heart, a daughter of frailty, Lord Westhaven had formed a hope and expectation of her remaining in an establishment under his protection; but soon his lordship was convinced, that the demon knew not the heart he had defamed.

"The forlorn Alvina, —— I dare not dwell upon her situation at that dreadful moment, — poor unprotected innocent!—Innocent! Oh, Fauconberg! had she been innocent, she could have defied calumny, — she could —— but I must not pause upon the sufferings she endured, or what she might have been.

"Ere Lord Westhaven gave his fatal assent to the wishes of his mother, he wrote a full account to his revered and beloved friend Mr. Cameron, of his situation relative to Donna Alvina, and of the negotiation entered into for

him by his mother, who had dexterously contrived, that it should now appear to him as one from which he could scarcely recede with honour.

"As this letter never reached Mr. Cameron, there can exist no doubt of its having been intercepted by Ramirez, to deprive Lord Westhaven of that conscientious advice which would have proved auspicious to the hapless orphan, now undone.

"But the energies of that mind, which the infatuations of love had lulled to childish imbecility, now awakened to full power; and in this moment of bitter conflict, without one friend to act for her, one protector to shield her from that baleful foe, who, under the seductive form of love, had so cruelly betrayed her, she stole away from the dwelling where her deceitful seducer had placed her; piously committing herself to the care of Almighty Providence, took lodgings in an obscure street, and there, scarcely acquainted with the language of that country in which she was cast away, awaited the result of a letter she had

despatched, imploring the pity and advice of Mr. Cameron.

"My poor undone mother had taken her estimate of Mr. Cameron's heart from Lord Westhaven's almost idolatrous veneration of him; and fortunately for her wish to procure his counsel, she was in possession of his address.

"The heart-piercing letter of the young destitute stranger was addressed to a man, whose integrity of mind was equalled by his strength of character; and his reply was in person. Her interesting appearance confirmed that parental feeling her letter had awakened,—he offered her an immediate asylum beneath his own roof, and took her to shelter under the maternal wing of his own sister.

"The miraculous recovery of the Dowager Lady Westhaven from the bed of expected death, to attend the nuptials of her son, in all the pride of magnificent adornment; with the elopement of Alvina from the protection of a married man; so completely unclosed the eyes

of Lord Westhaven to the plot which had been so successfully laid to entoil him, that dislike, almost amounting to abhorrence, of his bride, took possession of his mind in these moments of irritated feeling; whilst agony for the unknown fate of her who had, by her flight, proclaimed herself worthy of his honourable love, at length reduced him to serious illness, when he ordered his valet to despatch an entreaty to see Mr. Cameron without delay.

"Mr. Cameron lost no time in repairing to his beloved, though offending, pupil, whom he found in that state of mind upon which his influence could operate with full effect; and this excellent man so completely succeeded in bearing conviction to his lordship's conscience, that he ought now to shun, not seek, the poor undone, yet really virtuous, Alvina, that Mr. Cameron no longer considered the place of her retreat a necessary concealment; and hastened to relieve the anguished heart of his pupil, of the sore affliction endured for the uncertain fate of her whom, though he had betrayed, he still adored, by announcing to him

where she had sought and found protection; and where she had, alas! become a mother. Mother to one — without a name — an outcast from the precious ties of kindred.

"Soon after this interview with Mr. Cameron, Lord Westhaven recovered from his dangerous illness; but not to be a happy husband; for his wife was far from amiable, — in no one point of mind or manners likely to wean his heart from its ardent attachment to Alvina.

"But, at length, after four years of bitter misery, in his alienation from Alvina, Lord Westhaven was emancipated; for his wife was carried off by a pulmonary attack; and unexpectedly seeing the death of her ladyship in the newspaper, occasioned that severe indisposition of my hapless mother I already mentioned to you; — as, with the decease of her ladyship, was announced an intended union between Lord Westhaven and a beautiful ward of his mother's, as soon as propriety would permit the measure.

"It was this intelligence that also operated

upon Mr. Cameron, and led him post to London, where he found Lord Westhaven involved in much distress and perplexity. This ward of the Dowager, perhaps foreseeing the termination of Lady Westhaven's consumptive symptoms, considering it good speculation; or, perhaps, through thoughtless coquetry, commenced a flirtation with his Lordship, by the mode of so determined an attack, that, at first unprepared, he knew not how to parry; and, when once entered upon, he found his vanity so treacherous an ally, that he no longer thought of the defensive, — resting his fair and intrepid assailant's safety from serious attachment upon his being married, and to a woman with whom she was in the habits of intimacy; and his own, upon his unsubdued passion for the unfortunate Alvina.

"However, upon the decease of Lady Westhaven, the young Machiavellian adroitly intimated her expectations, as a matter long mutually implied; when, in utter dismay, his lordship mentioned the subject to his mother, as a question of total misconception of his in-

tentions, as he had been long and devotedly attached to another.

"The Dowager's reply overwhelmed her son with grief and consternation. She affected to consider his honour to her ward so deeply implicated, that it must be infamy to recede; and concluded their discussion of the matter by announcing, 'that she was no longer a stranger to the frailty of the object of his attachment; and that, should he dare to dishonour the illustrious house from which he had sprung, by raising an impure to share his dignities, her bitterest maledictions should be the attendants of his wedded life.'

"This threat, and the fatal secret betrayed, raised up at once an almost insurmountable barrier to Lord Westhaven's union with my hapless mother; and had not Mr. Cameron appeared to advocate her cause, it is more than probable, the only reparation in her seducer's power to make would have been superseded by the manœuvres of the Dowager Lady Westhaven and her ward; but the arguments of Mr. Cameron, combined with his lordship's

unsubdued attachment, prevailed; and, under the fierce opposing indignation of his parent, Lord Westhaven gave the degraded mother of his nameless child the lawful honours of his dignity.

"But happiness was not to be the attendant on this union; for the arrow of guilt bears many barbs. My mother, fearful of having lost the esteem of her husband, and very certain she had lost her own, was no longer the possessor of that mental sunbeam, which had been wont to make her the Promethean spark to all around her; whilst my father, conscious of the irreparable injury he had done to her, and to her first-born, never could behold either without remorse; and with the acute feelings of strong susceptibility, pronouncing that the woman who had proved frail deserved not a place among the daughters of unsullied fame; her loss of spotless purity assailed him like the ghost of murdered happiness. It haunted his domestic scenes, by anticipating alarm of hereditary influence upon her female progeny; and haunted his tenderly adoring bosom, by

the dire pangs of ceaseless apprehension, that the base, which he had proved fragile, again might fail; and these apprehensions found continued and increased encouragement from the machinations of the wily Abbé de Floriac, through the unfortunate admiration my hapless mother every where inspired.

"Nor did their offspring conduce to the happiness of this ill-fated pair. Their first-born, whom they themselves deprived of all inheritance — save that of a dire denunciation — put forth all those blossoms which parental pride might have hailed as lovely; whilst the son of their legitimate union was found to bear the canker, even as he budded: and the lovely Alvina, haplessly bearing no similitude to mark her paternal descent, declined, through the subtle inspirations of her mother's wily foe, in the affections of her suspicious father.

"Whilst my intellectual blessings had been suspended, my mother's cup of bitterness found a new ingredient unexpectedly mingled with it. Her younger brother, Stefano, had

been led on, by his wild associates, to join some political projects inimical to the despotic power of the Inquisition: — they were discovered, and he escaped the fangs of the infuriated synod, by a flight to England. To his sister, in his forlorn hopelessness, he applied for means to abscond from Europe; but importuned her not to betray to her lord his being so near.

" 'For,' he said, 'I wish not to destroy your happiness, my poor Alvina, if you can taste any in such an union; and I have sworn — with Ferdinand sworn, by all that is binding in sacred obligation, to wreak the vengeance of our wounded family honour upon the head of him who basely burst the ties of unsuspecting hospitality, the moment I behold him — even though it were in the presence of the hapless victim of his perfidy.'

" Under alarm of such dire consequences, my unfortunate mother devised every project for the concealment of her brother's presence in England from my father, who, she knew, entertained, on his part, hostile inclinations

towards Stefano. But the impostor Abbé, ever watchful of her actions, discovered the visits of her brother to her; and first sending intimation to the supreme council, at Madrid, of where the fugitive was to be found, next took care to have it artfully betrayed to his patron, 'that his wife was concealing from him the frequent visits of a young and handsome foreign gentleman;' when the first open blaze of his long smouldering suspicion now burst out in accusations to his heart-broken wife, who could not then remove this injurious impression of her innocence, without endangering the lives of her husband and of her brother.

"At length my insensibility to disgrace and misery terminated; and surely the moments of that suspension had given still more susceptibility to my feelings; for who can portray what I suffered, when again folded in the tender embraces of my agitated parents, — of my mother, whom I could no longer gaze upon with the overflowing eyes of filial delight and reverence, — of my father, whom it was not for me to behold without a burning blush.

Now, alas! it was for me to cast my humbled eyes upon the ground, lest my sorrow's piteous glances might be construed into accusation."

"My wish was now to return to Annandale; and that wish was gratified. It was long ere I saw my parents again; and when I did so, it was not for my tranquillity. I received a confidential letter from the amiable Lady Camilla Dudley, then sinking beneath the fatal shaft that had pierced me. For, oh Albert! my friend! my friend! how may a single transgression of an erring mortal cause misery to many an innocent sufferer! This lovely creature — as good as lovely — not knowing our hapless consanguinity, imbibed a fatal, unhallowed passion; and the same cruel breath that conveyed to me the first murmur of my dishonour, betrayed to her the dire nature of the secret flame she for months had cherished."

IN CONTINUATION.

"The letter of Lady Camilla announced, in the gentlest manner, 'that the torch of discord had calamitously been lighted between her father and the amiable Lady Westhaven; and that unless I appeared to intercede for my suffering—and she felt assured—calumniated mother, she was to be sent back to her family in Spain, under a most afflicting stigma.'

"The moment I made this torturing communication known to Mr. Cameron, in the true spirit of animated friendship he determined to accompany me to the south.

"When arrived at my father's house, in London, I found a scene awaiting me, which not even the alarming information of the gentle Camilla had prepared me for. My parents, reduced to the shadow of their former selves, I found in dire disunion, achieved through the long-laid train of the vindictive machinations of Ramirez, whom Lord Westhaven never once suspected; although he had

long withdrawn his esteem, and had anxiously wished to dismiss him from his family. But the man who had in his possession his lordship's disgraceful secret, could not, without danger, be broken with, however bribed to silence.

"Alas! my friend, I found my gentle mother a prisoner in her own house; and my irritated father in a state little short of distraction. My interview with each parent was agonizing. My father, in anguished terror, lest my too sensitive mind should again be overthrown, reluctantly accused my mother to me of clandestine interviews with an unknown paramour; and produced a billet in her writing, as a proof of this assertion; and which billet contained an appointment with some one, 'who, she assured, might venture in safety to her boudoir, at a specified hour, as her lord would be then engaged upon an important question at the house.'

"With his lordship's permission, I questioned my mother upon this billet: without hesitation, she acknowledged its having been

the production of her pen; but, when I requested to learn to whom she had addressed it, she burst into an agony of tears; and, as she wrung her beautiful hands, and called on Heaven to witness the purity of the motives which had actuated her in writing it, I flung myself on my knees before her, implored her by all that was likely to affect maternal tenderness, 'if she wished to save the senses of her unfortunate Xavier from a second overthrow, to vindicate her fame from this aspersion.'

"She threw herself upon my neck, and I feared the convulsive agony of her frame must have annihilated her, as she faintly articulated: —

"'No, not to save my darling child from the bitter calamity which my misdeeds drew on him, can I reveal the fatal secret that thus destroys my wedded fame.'

"I now flew to Mr. Cameron, and importuned him to exert his powerful influence in vanquishing my mother's adherence to this fatal silence; but as he left me, in compliance with my request, he bade me 'not hope for

success to his undertaking, since maternal tenderness and love of fame had failed to operate.'

"For a considerable time Mr. Cameron remained in conference with Lady Westhaven; and then, in visible agitation, came to me, and fervently pressing my hand, burst into tears, as he exclaimed:—'Your mother is an angel! Xavier; but I cannot extricate her, for I am myself now bound by the dire secret which so calamitously deprives her of the confidence of her husband.'

"I now sought my mother; and, devoutly on my knees before her, breathed my thanksgiving to Heaven for her acquittal by Mr. Cameron.

"'Your mother is an angel!' still vibrated through my exulting heart; and I had need of some consolatory theme, for I had now the grief to learn, that in the first paroxysm of Lord Westhaven's jealous phrenzy, he had sent the innocent babe, Alvina, to Madrid, to be taken care of by her mother's family, as a child whom he no longer acknowledged. Al-

vina, thus early embarked on the rough sea of misfortune, did arrive in safety at Madrid, through the miraculous exertion of the man who had charge of her; for, wrecked in the gulf of Cadiz, every female on board perished, save the cherub, Alvina; whom her uncle, Don Ferdinand, so far compassionated, that he procured a careful nurse for her, and sent her to the protection of the abbess of Santa Barbara.

"Although the assertion of Mr. Cameron, that my mother was an angel, conveyed proof like holy writ to my belief, my father was not so readily convinced. His mind had been long imbibing those skilfully planted suspicions and prejudices which now combined with presumptive evidence of guilt, which nothing short of absolute testimony to the contrary could overthrow. However, the assertions of Mr. Cameron subdued the wild phrenzy of his irritation; rekindled the ardour of his wishes to prove her innocent; and led to the concession of permitting her to return with Mr. Cameron to the parental shelter, which, in

former calamity, he had benignly yielded to her; there to remain, until the ambiguity she chose to persevere in should bend to her imperative duty of vindicating her fame, for at least the restoration of her suffering husband's peace.'

"Oh! Fauconberg, had you beheld the afflicted angel—for though a fallen one, her fall was like the lark's descent to earth, making its soar towards the ethereal realms more striking — had you beheld her, when she quitted home, a martyr to her sense of a most direful duty, your heart must have bled in sympathy. But I must not give way to these digressions of feeling: no, not even to dwell upon the virtuous inflictions of my heroic mother."

CHAPTER XVI.

"I WAS not permitted to accompany my mother into Scotland. No, I was commanded to stay, and console my father. I console him! I! whose very existence planted daggers of remorse within his bosom! I! who there stood a living testimony that the virtue of her, whom he now suspected, could prove frail. Yet I strove to do my duty. I endeavoured to cheer him: but the light which had yielded me the brilliancy that long had beamed in playfulness through my vivacity, was extinguished — the arrows of repartee broken — the bow unstrung — and my sorrowing father now beheld me as a green sapling, struck by the sirocco's blight, and drooping in the withering blast, ere its foliage had put forth all its riches.

"'Let us travel, my poor boy,' said Lord Westhaven; 'and I will write to Mr. Came-

ron, and tell him, the moment your mother pleases to recall us, by awakening to a sense of imperative duty to her husband, we will return.'

"We did travel to whatever parts of Europe the disturbed state of the Continent permitted us to visit; for, like our own bosoms, peace was banished thence; and in no spot could we find ourselves secure or tranquil. We, therefore, at length returned to England; and, on our arrival in London, found new calamities awaiting us. Lady Emma had married according to the dictates of ambition; and scarcely had she passed one year of wedded life, ere she eloped from her husband with the ingrate Hillsborough; and, horrible to relate! accompanied by her young brother in her profligate flight; leaving the drooping Lady Camilla to encounter the tremendous shock of such an unexpected elopement, which her physicians found her unequal to sustain, and pronounced her life in imminent peril.

"'Fly to your mother, Xavier,' said my hapless father. 'Tell her my sufferings; and,

if she ever possessed one particle of affection for me, my parental miseries must lead her to pity and relieve me of the burden, which, of all I have borne, save one, has proved the most agonizing. But let your mother determine upon what she may, relative to her own fatal secret, bring her, Xavier, to her almost distracted husband.'

"Need I say the wings were fleet, which bore me to Annandale; or that those of my mother and Mr. Cameron were rapid in expansion? Yet we arrived too late in London. Lady Camilla, 'beauteous flower, nipped by an untimely frost'—Alas, alas!"

IN CONTINUATION.

"Whilst the death-knell of his lovely, inestimable child still vibrated through his ears to his bursting heart, my almost distracted father, having learned the route of the fugitives, set out for Paris—the peace of Amiens having opened that retreat for the iniquitous trio—to

tear at least Lord Briarfield from his vile association.

"Lord Westhaven was most unfortunately accompanied on his fatal expedition by the diabolical Ramirez, who, I cannot doubt, was the abettor of the delinquent party in every branch of their atrocity.

"Scarcely had my unhappy father arrived in Paris, ere he fell dangerously ill; and during his indisposition—of which his friends in England were left in total ignorance—Ramirez took care not to trace out the delinquents; nor to deliver to Lord Westhaven the letter of Mr. Cameron, intimating, 'that he no longer felt a scruple to reveal to him the culprit, for whose misdeeds the fame of his affectionate and exemplary wife had been calumniated; and to entreat his lordship's prompt return to England, where facts could be proved to him, which would neither be safe nor satisfactory to attempt by letter.'

"Through Lord Westhaven's illness, and the manœuvring of Ramirez, to favour the profligate party he spent hours each day with,

whilst affecting to my heart-wrung father that he could obtain no trace of, weeks glided away—until Buonaparte broke his faith with England, and laid that atrocious embargo on individual liberty so ruinous to many, as well as to my afflicted parents.

"My father's detention in France overwhelmed us with the most poignant distress; and scarcely could I support my drooping mother under the lengthened infliction of her husband's suspicions: but, how did our distress rise into indignant bitterness, when it transpired, that whilst my poor father was the lone prisoner of treachery, the delinquents had effected their escape to Naples, and were there to be seen amongst the most brilliant luminaries of the gay world!

"But the acuteness of my feelings expanded into action. I had then a faithful Dermod, my attendant from my boyish days; and even in the moment when I had lost myself, Mac Alpin forsook me not. His head was clear and deep as his own Clyde; and I could not in existence have found a more skilful abettor,

or a more courageous associate in danger and difficulties; and after every thing that interest and money could attempt in this country had failed, I set off with my faithful Mac Alpin and a French auxiliary, upon the rash enterprise of rescuing my father from his base captivity.

"The accomplishment of our project might fill up many an interesting page for a romance, but I have now neither time nor spirits to dwell upon all our perils, and all our privations. But, however we suffered, we still persevered; and the rapture was at length mine, to embrace my father as a denizen of the world.

"But what arrows assailed my father's heart in the moment my anxious work was achieved! For in that moment, and not till then, until I saw my parent safe on British ground, did I reveal to him who had been his guide out of prison, and his safeguard through the perils of his flight; for by anticipation I seemed to dread the effect his parental sensibility might have upon him. Fauconberg, my

friend! I cannot describe to you the affecting self-upbraidings of my father at this moment, when his heart cleaved unto me as its life-blood.

"Bitter was now the disappointment that awaited me. My father would not fulfil my expectation of being permitted to lead him in amity to my mother; for 'no,' he said, 'he owed it to me, never to present himself before her until, as his peace-offering, he restored her alienated child — her babe, Alvina, to her fostering arms.' Vain also were my expectations of accompanying him to Spain. 'He feared the impetuosity of my youth,' he said, 'as dangerous to the purpose of conciliating my mother's ungracious relatives.' But no; my tender parent feared the contumely my hapless birth might inflict upon my mental susceptibility.

"'No,' he said, 'idol of my upbraiding heart, go to your hapless mother. Comfort her, if your touching tender duties can comfort those who wronged you. And to convince your mother I take no hostile feelings with me

into Spain, send Mr. Cameron to accompany me; and, with the dove of peace then by the hand, she cannot fear for me, or for her brothers.'

"The ever kind Mr. Cameron lost not one unnecessary moment in joining his grateful pupil, Lord Westhaven; some of the wounds of whose lacerated heart he hastened to heal, and to augment. For those of his connubial suffering he had a sovereign balm; whilst for those of his parental, he had new and anguished torture.

"Alas! my friend, it was to save my brother's fame, my suffering mother sacrificed her own. Oh! what burning blushes have my cheeks been doomed to mantle with! Lord Briarfield's allowance was munificent, yet he exceeded it; and he made that use of his mother's name to a draft, which the laws of his country permitted not. My mother's banker discovered the delinquent when it was scarcely possible to save him; but the affecting agonies of maternal anguish obtained indefatigable agents in his cause. His wretched

mother concealed the degenerate culprit for some time in her own private closet; and her tender aim was as much to conceal the horrid transaction from his father, and the world at large, as the defaulter from condign punishment: and it was the clandestine employment of this heart-rived parent, in saving her degenerate child from ignominious death, which that child's confidential agent and adviser seized upon to blast her connubial happiness and fame.

"These communications of Mr. Cameron nearly subdued Lord Westhaven by bitter regret upon his harsh and unjustifiable suspicions of his suffering wife, by the dire stigma affixed upon the common honesty of the heir apparent to the family honours, and by the torturing comparison his agonized repentance drew between his sons.

"But, now all wild impatience to present his interesting peace-offering to his injured wife, Lord Westhaven would scarcely yield one moment's repose to Mr. Cameron till they embarked for Spain; but, before they did

so, employed the pen of Mr. Cameron to inform my mother of the moment they were getting under weigh; but not a line did he unfortunately write himself upon the subject of her purification, only desiring his amanuensis to state, 'that he felt himself too great an aggressor to presume to address her, until the interceding kisses of the sweet cherub he was hastening to restore to her maternal love, should plead in his behalf.'

"But the hope and joy which this expedition of Lord Westhaven gave us in perspective, to what a scene of wail and wo it changed! My mother's tender preparations for her husband and her child, to what a termination were they doomed! My mental efforts for firmness, unshrinkingly to behold the re-union of my beloved family, of which I was denied the name, for what an agonizing purpose were they exerted! My father! my kind, affectionate father, we never beheld more! and the son for whom his mother had endured so much to save from an ignominious death, and to preserve in the estimation of the world, even he appeared, with

his iniquitous associates, from Italy appeared, to turn that mother, in the first moments of her connubial anguish, from the house of her late lord.

"I must pass over my father's closing scene with promptitude. I dare not dwell upon it. Had I been with him, Fauconberg, to shield him from the unhallowed hand of ———; but, hold! I must not give suspicion utterance. No, I suspect no one, and least of all my father! my father! of the impious act, which all things seemed calculated to establish.

"Lord Westhaven parted at night in the *posada* at ——— with his old friend, in affecting anticipation of the delight he should experience before the same hour the succeeding night, in hearing the dear babe, whom he had so cruelly alienated, once more call him 'father.' He appeared in perfect health and perfect composure when he retired for that fatal night; and had also joined Mr. Cameron, with pious energy, in the form of prayer which that venerable man always said with his travelling companions; and could my father's own

hand — no, no, no! but all, all was dexterously arranged, as if it had been so.

"It was Mr. Cameron's cruel destiny to find his long beloved friend and pupil — to find him as if all his precepts had only acted as the passing breeze. Affectionate, pious, and feeling, the shock was direful. He had no one near to comfort him, or take charge of the dear deceased. He fell ill, dangerously ill: he had no one to write for him, not even to summon Lord Westhaven's valet from Madrid, where he had been left to take care of Mr. Cameron's old and faithful servant, who had been taken ill there; and yet the new Lord Westhaven had been apprized of the horrible event in full time, even to anticipate the usual speed of public information, to announce the fatal intelligence to the heart-wrung widow. Oh heaven! where was filial duty, gratitude, and mercy in that terrible moment? how did the barbarian announce it?

"I struck the unnatural monster to the ground when he commanded his own mother and mine to quit his house on the instant, to

make way for Lady Emma and her paramour. The action was not fraternal, but my provocation was enormous. I then bore my swooning mother to her own apartments; and then commanded my father's successor in my turn, and in a tone that made the recreant tremble, 'not to dare her molestation there, whilst I sought a suitable retreat for his afflicted parent.'

"I next summoned our family physician, and placed my mother's own attached *femme de chambre* and Mac Alpin to guard her from insult; and even in the sacred moment, when the magnitude of my grief demanded retirement to give it indulgence, or to supplicate for fortitude to endure it, I was thus compelled to sally forth and seek an asylum for my widowed parent: yet in that bitter season of mental agony, awake to the peculiar delicacy of my hapless mother's situation, I directed my application for refuge to the Dowager Lady Westhaven.

"Fear not for me, my dear Fauconberg, that I evinced any consanguinity to my inhuman brother in the manner I conveyed the

dire intelligence I had the anguish to impart; no, I attended to every dictate which your feeling heart could have inspired, and the afflicted parent was not subdued.

"'Bring your mother instantly to me, Xavier,' said the weeping Dowager. 'You risked your life, even whilst I was your avowed enemy, to bear me from my consuming dwelling; and your mother shall never want a shelter, and a kind one too, as long as I have one to yield her.'

"Kind, affectingly kind, was the Dowager's reception of this daughter of calamity: she even took her to her arms, enfolded her there with maternal tenderness, and bitterly their tears mingled.

"I had now another imperative duty to perform, even in defiance of all my mother's claims upon me; for even stigma as I was upon her fame, I was her all under heaven of consolation; yet to leave her even in the first moments of her wo was inevitable, for the claims of Mr. Cameron could not be resisted.

"My parting from my mother was like the

separation of soul and body of him who fears to die."

IN CONTINUATION.

"My melancholy expedition into Spain led me to the bed-side of Mr. Cameron, for ignorance in his medical attendant had confined him still to that post where the dire shock he sustained had consigned him; but my presence, operating like magic balm, soon enabled him to arise.

"The first moment I found it possible to leave Mr. Cameron for a day, I proceeded to Santa Barbara, where, presenting my mother's letter to the prioress, I was received by her with infinitely less of horror than I had anticipated.

"My cherub sister I found much more beautiful than even her infant promise of loveliness had guaranteed for. I had lost every trace in memory of what she now appeared;

but finding her what I did, made ample amends for the partial effect of first impressions; sweet, affectionate, and with a mind more highly cultivated than her extreme juvenility and my ideas of a monastery could have authorized me to expect: and as my mother's letter to her aunt was to request her alienated child might be delivered to me, for the purpose of conveying her to the arms of her sole-surviving parent, Donna Ellena thought it unnecessary to delay compliance for the assent of Don Ferdinand, and delivered the young Alvina to my care.

"Through the prevailing influence of gold, I, with some difficulty, obtained a hallowed resting place for the remains of my beloved ill-fated father in consecrated ground; but, through the distracted state of the Continent at that period, no effort could prove successful for having them removed to England; and at length, Mr. Cameron being sufficiently recovered for the undertaking, we set out for home, bearing in our keeping the envelope of a letter directed in the hand-writing of Lord Briarfield

to the Abbé de Floriac. This envelope, bearing various post-marks in attestation of its having been transmitted from Naples to ———, was found in my father's chamber the morning after his demise. How it got there, Fauconberg, is a question of horror which has not been decided.

"The cherub Alvina, possessed with a strong impression of a wild vision of childish memory, portraying some idea of having last beheld her mother floating on a troubled water, and that she was of all beings she had ever beheld the most beautiful, was incessantly prattling in rapturous anticipation of her reunion with her mother. But, alas! alas! neither Alvina nor Xavier were fated more to behold their lovely mother."

"My sympathizing friend, I almost despair of firmness to bear me through my narrative of the events which occurred during my unfortunate absence; for over one, a dark, a dire

obscurity hangs, which I have not been permitted to penetrate.

"The kindness of the capricious Dowager to my ill-fated mother did not long survive my departure from England; for the will of my father, formed in the moment of frenzied jealousy, pronounced the young Alvina disinherited, through illegitimacy, from his marriage settlement upon younger children. This will had been placed in his lawyer's hands in the paroxysm of his ungovernable irritation, and from thence it was drawn forth publicly to stigmatize the innocent mother and child, and to afford the Dowager Lady Westhaven, through the influence of the young peer, who had now become the orb for homage, or through the mandate of her dictator Ramirez, the cruel plea for sending the hapless relict of her son from beneath her roof, as one unworthy of countenance or protection.

"Oh, my mother! my mother! deprived in one moment, not only of protection, but even of pitying friends, by this fatal calumny.

Albert, I can form no connected narrative of this dire moment. I dare not trust my tortured fancy in portraying her agonized sufferings when thrust forth fameless, friendless, and forlorn; for her own long attached *femme de chambre*, but that very day become a mother, could not accompany the heart-wrung wanderer, who was now compelled to accept the plausibly offered services of the villanous abbé, who had always endeavoured to extenuate to her the absence of moral worth in her degenerate son, through his having no authority vested in him over the religious principles of Lord Briarfield.

"Oh, think of the desolation of this forlorn outcast when compelled to accept the counsels and aid of Ramirez! the caitiff who advised her not to await at Annandale my return, which she had wisely resolved upon, but to send for Mrs. Cameron; and remain in London, where she could on the spot negotiate with her lawyers, should she find cause to employ them for the recovery of her daughter's portion; and with much apparent

kindness took a furnished house for her, where the poor recluse remained under the sole protection of the domestics the abbé had placed about her, and without one friend or counsellor; for with fame all had fled from her, until her attached Dodson, recovered from her *accouchement*, returned to her: but scarcely had the faithful Dodson rejoined my hapless mother, when, the very day preceding that she expected the arrival of Mrs. Cameron, the poor recluse received a letter which greatly agitated her; but to Dodson she was silent upon its subject. Shortly after she ordered her carriage, and set out in it alone: she ordered it to Kensington Gardens, where, entering unattended, she was never heard of more."

CHAPTER XVII.

"When I returned, and every investigation proved unavailing, that all was pronounced vain, and conviction told me I had lost my mother, the light of reason fled, and left me unillumined in my torpid clay.

"For many weeks I was insensible of my woes; and the good Camerons watched over me beneath their own roof, as if I were the insensate idol of their adoration.

"Nor was the poor disgraced Alvina disregarded by these good Samaritans; for whilst my mental faculties were suspended, they not only exerted themselves to promote her happiness, but in every effort to clear away that stigma upon her birth which the unfounded jealousy of her father had rashly established: but no exertion for the security of the dear child's portion could avail, as the marriage

settlement contained a flaw in its composition relative to the provision for younger children, which had been before undetected; but of which the new peer, her unworthy brother, taking advantage, the law could not redress the poor innocent, who now stood beggared by the same diabolical villany, which, notwithstanding Mr. Cameron's clear attestation of the latter opinion of her father, illegitimized her in the conviction of many, and bereaved her of both her parents.

"In the fatal testament where, by acting under the influence of frenzied jealousy, Lord Westhaven calumniated thus the innocence of his spotless wife — for as a wife she was immaculate — and deprived her in consequence of friends and protectors in the hour of need, a noble provision was secured to me; but secured by the same instrument that defamed my mother and stigmatized my helpless sister. Much as I revered my beloved father's memory, I would have spurned it, had it not been for my poor Alvina; but for her sake I deter-

mined that the new peer of her house should, at a convenient season, comply with my father's last testament relative to me.

"And for four years, Fauconberg, I was permitted to evince the part of an anxious parent to the lovely bereaved child. I watched over her health with the most unremitting care; conjointly with Mr. and Mrs. Cameron yielded her every instruction that was in our respective or united power to impart; but over the formation of her piety and moral health I hung with an intensity of interest and attention, as if my own eternal salvation depended solely upon how she was trained for after life. And never had a preceptor a more heavenly mind to mould: but upon this theme I must not dwell. It would teem with too much mental peril to my inestimable friend.

"But, alas! for my poor Alvina and for me, Don Ferdinand de Verodia, as if awakening from a four years' trance, arrived in England; and there, irritated beyond all that the wounded honour of his house could endure, through the stigma thrown upon it by the last

will of the late Lord Westhaven, he demanded my sister from me — demanded her as the only natural guardian who had appeared in right to claim her from me. The law awarded her to him, for I had no plea. I had no definite place in society. I was an outcast — an outlaw by birth, and had no legal claim upon the sweet ties of nature."

"Alvina, sweet, affectionate, and grateful child! she was ruthlessly torn from the blighted tree that had vainly hoped through all the storms of life to yield her shelter; and all that remained for me in consolation was, through conviction, that by her sojourn in Annandale an infallible antidote had been distilled for her pure mind to the pernicious influence of the customs and manners which had undone her hapless mother; and mental firmness instilled to bear the trials she might in possibility be doomed to by bigotry.

"Don Ferdinand, unfortunate in love, and disappointed in his fraternal hopes, had not

taken the afflictions of life as unpalatable medicines to his benefit, nor considered them as

> 'The toad, ugly and venomous,
> 'Wearing a precious jewel in its head;'

for they added irritability to a temper not naturally mild, augmented his enormity of pride, and under the fatal belief that worse men were more highly favoured by Providence than himself, he became gloomy and misanthropic; and Father Sancho Torquemada had now assumed full dominion over his actions, as he had long held jurisdiction over his conscience; but that jurisdiction was not held in a seat of mercy, for this despotic ruler was a bigot and an inquisitor, to whom racks and tortures were as familiar as they were congenial.

"Father Sancho speedily determined my poor Alvina should be forced from the heresy she had imbibed in Britain; and, as some expiation of her mother's transgression, that the pure innocent should be devoted to conventual vows.

"But firm in faith, and intrepid in spirit, no inquisitorial threat could subdue Alvina, until a menace was resorted to of trepanning me from Scotland before its terrific synod, and condemning me for using sorcery to defraud the Catholic persuasion of a promising member; when, well aware that what an inquisitor threatened he had power to perform, the heart-wrung victim abjured the religion which Mr. Cameron had taught her how to prize as the life-drop of her future bliss: but the conventual vows she still rebelled against; and the dire inflictions which this contumacy occasioned, the now abbess of Santa Barbara, (Donna Ellena being deceased, and a successor appointed,) contrived to send me intimation of, that I might strive, through our laws, to extricate a subject of our realm from such a tyrannical and cruel yoke. But, alas! those who had power to interfere would not; and all the nameless nonentity in the code of claims had power for was to fly to Spain, our alliance with that country yielding me facility,

and present myself before Don Ferdinand to expostulate or implore.

"It was with difficulty I obtained an interview with my haughty and inexorable uncle; yet I feel conviction I should not have been doomed to find him the latter, had it not been for the stern influence of Father Sancho; but as it was, all I could obtain in mitigation of the sufferings of my heart's-elected child was in the bitter compromise, 'That if I quitted Spain forthwith, the persecution of Alvina for becoming a nun should cease; but that, if ever I sought her presence, or attempted correspondence with her through any medium, she should be instantly conveyed to distant climes, where her consignment to the cloister should become irremediable.'

"Need I say my separation from my sister was a sad one; but I cherished a latent hope to cheer me, and which enabled me to sustain the parting interview without the total subjugation of my firmness.

"It was at this period I became acquainted with the amiable Father José, sent to pay me

every attention in the form of sage advice and benevolent urbanity by the abbess of Santa Barbara, herself then confined to her cell by indisposition, and unable to see me.

"From Father José I learned that the miscreant Ramirez had been forced to fly from England for malpractices amenable to British laws, and had returned to Spain not to respect those of his own country. I also now learned from this venerable and innately pious monk all that knowledge of the secret history and exploits of Ramirez which have borne their place in my sad narrative; and with the sacred testimony of this holy man to the villany of the impostor abbé in my possession, I cherished the fond hope of using it for the purification of my lamented mother's fame to the Dowager Lady Westhaven; and by that means, awakening her pity for the persecuted Alvina, induce her, through her influence with the Spanish ambassador, to enforce at least the promised cessation of cruelties against my beloved sister, if she could not exert her power to have her recalled to England.

"But, born for disappointment, I found the interest I had so powerfully awakened in the bosom of Lady Westhaven now extinct. Lady Emma, divorced from her first sacred engagement, and now wife to her paramour—the Dowager's *protégé*—was taken into that favour which had been so scrupulously denied my mother; and our painful interview terminated by her ladyship's affirmation 'of cherishing firm conviction of the justice of the grounds upon which her deceased beloved son had formed that will which had consigned the fame of his wife to infamy, and her daughter to a stigma that ought to make her hail with gratitude the fortunate offer of an asylum for a female of such frail maternal descent.'

"Stung to the inmost soul of trembling sensibility, as to my asylum in every grief, I now winged my flight to Annandale; to Annandale, my sanctuary even in distraction, but to be such no longer: for, born to misery and sorrow, I arrived only to close the eyes of my protector—my friend—my guide—my

rock — my consolation. His dying pillow became my watch-tower, to which gratitude and affection chained me. No sighs, no moans, no plaint of my own individual sorrows escaped from my bursting heart to take by pitying sympathy from the anticipating joys of a departing saint. A saint in very truth; for the beam which illumined his last hours, emanating from beneath the receding veil that separated mortality and beatitude, proclaimed the hoped-for glories of the just.

"And that beam, though it melted the mourner, yielded a sweet and cheering ray to light me on the path that must lead to our reunion; and my heart, though chilled with grief, warmed with the hope that the sins of others ——— But upon this appalling subject I dare not dwell.

"By the death of Mr. Cameron the only bond which bound me to Britain was broken; and the impulse of my indignant feeling felt no longer an impediment.

"Mr. Cameron had bequeathed me one

thousand pounds, expressed in the most affecting and affectionate terms in his last sad testament. His estimable sister having been called hence about three months before him; and he being survived by no poor relatives, whom I might have hesitated in depriving of this sum, with it I purchased a commission, and equipped myself for our glorious army; my dear lamented Mr. Cameron's executor, in whom I knew I could place confidence, and he knowing I should not disgrace his recommendation, negotiating all things for me under the name of my parental friend, meaning to abjure for ever that appellative under which I had borne such miseries; and leaving untouched and unclaimed an affluent portion to be drawn from the resources of a family which had so cruelly affixed eternal stigma upon my hapless mother's name, and cast my helpless sister from them into the iron grasp of bigotry and oppression.

"Led on by the keenly wounded feelings of indignant sensibility, I hastened to the Peninsula, secure of the hapless Xavier remaining undetected, even by former associates,

under the name of Cameron. During my first deprivation of mind I had grown surprisingly in stature; and from the hour of that calamity, shame, wo, and malady had changed, not only the expression and tint, but the whole style of my countenance; and the voice, which until then had sounded the animating tones of playful vivacity, could not betray me in the plaintive tones of the heart of desolation; and as I had avoided every species of society since the flowers of my young hope were blighted, I had no recognition to apprehend.

"Whilst in Spain, lending my feeble aid to our country's cause, I still found some small ray of consolation from being in the same kingdom with my beloved sister: and although forbidden to see or hold correspondence with the dear isolated child, I flattered myself that it might be ordained for her to find her brother near her, should she require aid from his protecting arm; but it was to you, my dear Albert, my ever succouring friend, that important service was decreed by Heaven.

"Having now become acquainted with the

sorrows of your mysterious *protégé*, you can no longer wonder, my dear Fauconberg, at the melancholy which has incased me; and you can now form some conception of the horror that assailed me, of the agony of my feelings, when I detected the destroyer of both my beloved parents an inhabitant of the same hut with me; yes, whilst in my bosom was sheltered that very portrait of the one which had turned the poniard's point from the heart of the other, in the first attempt made to deprive my father of existence the fatal night of his demise; for so the state of the picture and of his bosom most unequivocally proclaimed. Yet I bore all that horror, all that agony, unsubdued: but the billets of my poor Alvina, from which I doubted not Don Ferdinand having discovered how far I had transgressed my compact, and that to me the forlorn, the persecuted Alvina, would have to ascribe her sufferings and monastic captivity in another hemisphere, struck the dire chord that vibrated from my heart to my brain, and left me with

suspended reason insensible even to your kindness.

"Once more I have awakened to the light of intellect, and that light presents me firm conviction of my hapless life being drawing towards its close. You, my friend of friends! have promised to look to my mortal mould, and for my immaterial I trust I have been provident. In this confidence I should feel secure, were but my ardently aspirated supplications mercifully granted for my hearing, with certainty, of my sister's emancipation from her persecutors; and for my discovery of the fate of my adored mother, that I might then seek out her sepulchre and there expire, in the joyful hope of having my remains entombed with hers.

"I have said little to you, Fauconberg, of my sensibility of all I owe you: but genuine gratitude is a mental influence, and will overflow in more torrents from the eyes than from the lips; at least so I have ever found it, when your unparalleled friendship has been its theme.

"When I abjured the name by which I had been known in Britain, and recoiled from my portion in the indignant spirit of tortured feeling, I did not formally renounce it; my claim is therefore uncancelled; and though I will never make use of any part of it whilst reason holds dominion over my actions, yet the same feeling does not operate to withhold my bequeathing it to those who will know better how to use it than Lord Westhaven.

"Accompanying this packet you will find my will, executed ere I joined our army, in which I nominated my beloved sister my sole heir; but to which testament I have added a codicil, appointing you my executor, and bequeathing you a mark of my affection and my gratitude; and in the envelope of this packet you will also find a power of attorney for receiving monies on my account, should the sad task devolve to you of providing for me in calamity.

"The moment draws near in which I must

deposit this packet in your hands; and my feelings press so heavily upon me, that——— In short, Fauconberg, when it becomes your task to act for me, Heaven will shower down recompense: but should I be gone

'To death and sweet repose,'

surely I may hope to register my blessings on your head in heaven's own chancery.

"Were Alvina Dudley possessed of those claims of which calumny has bereaved her, were she in England, emancipated from persecution, a restored member of the mild faith of our own church, and were I her legal guardian, her permission to bestow her hand upon you, would be the first wish of my heart. Judge how I esteem you.

"Adieu, Fauconberg! friend of friends, adieu! We shall meet for happier friendship in those realms where I am to discover what happiness imports; for in those realms I do firmly trust I shall find that inheritance of which I cannot, cannot believe the trans-

gressions of another are absolutely to deprive me.

"Adieu! adieu! and believe me, Albert, the last blessings will be aspirated, for you and Alvina, of

"XAVIER ALMEDINA."

CHAPTER XVIII.

The heart of Fauconberg was feeling, and his attachment to Cameron sincere; he therefore could not peruse the narrative of his friend's sad sorrows unmoved; and the more intense his interest and commiseration became for this most amiable victim to the transgressions of others, the more painfully acute his anxiety grew to befriend poor Cameron; and the moment his powerful sympathy permitted him to do aught, but weep and wring his hands, for "this noble mind o'erthrown," he traversed the apartment he was in with rapid steps, calling every thought to council for the forlorn hope of how, or where, or when he could distil efficacious balm for Cameron.

At length his train of intense thinking upon the possible mitigation of Cameron's sorrows, and of Alvina's persecutions, was interrupted by Dermod, as bearer of a note from March-

mont, stating, "that having wandered over the beach as far as Rosindale Park, he and Nettlethorp had been importuned by the kind-hearted favourites of fortune to remain and dine, as the sapient's aid was in requisition relative to a famous exploit of the modern Proteus."

Fauconberg felt this opportune absence of Nettlethorp and Marchmont as a relief to himself from observation upon the sympathy which oppressed him, and upon which he could make no communication; but relative to Cameron he entertained no hope of his being seduced from the arrangements of his too sensitive feelings; still he determined to let the heart-rived sufferer know that such absence had occurred, and by a trusty messenger, whose presence would not wound the feelings of this sad son of sorrow; for Carlo had been trained, as a messenger between these friends to act when indisposition occasioned poor Cameron to absent himself in his chamber from their literary cabinet. Albert, therefore, now despatched a note by Carlo with the

above intelligence, adding, "that he should himself leave in the antechamber some of the most tempting viands his lonely board supplied, to lure him into the performance of a necessary duty."

Carlo soon returned to attend his sorrowing master to his solitary meal; and, according to specification, Albert took some food and wine, and which, announcing by a gentle tap of affectionate anxiety his having performed his promise, he left at the chamber door of Cameron.

Scarcely had the wondering, sorrowing Dermod removed the nearly untouched dinner of his pensive master, when he returned, bearing a letter from General De la Warr to Fauconberg.

This communication from the General announced, "That in consequence of being unexpectedly compelled to set off instantly for London, he was under the painful necessity of postponing all further discussion upon the subject most interesting to his heart until his return to Rosindale."

This expedition of General De la Warr's to the metropolis emanated from the exploit of Daniel Lancefield, in his knight-errantry of avenging the cause of the beautiful Olivia, upon her base traducer, the witty Henny, whose wit, however, proved itself at fault, when it allowed her to imagine that the son of Deb Lancefield was a simpleton, on whom the wiles of a deep designer, whose bloom, as well as principal of fortune, was on the wane, could take effect.

On her way from Lady Lancefield's first ball to her home, it struck the wily Mrs. Titterton that the speculation might prove successful, were the witty Henny to spread her snares for the captivation of the romantic heir of the house of Lancefield—for romantic in her idea he must be, "as it had pleased the Gods to make him poetical"—but, after much consultation upon the important subject, and its probable success, the confederate Machiavellians pronounced "that the more ignorant Daniel would prove the more likely gudgeon

to be taken by the bait of the *bel esprit's manœuvres.*"

For many succeeding days the wily snares of the confederates seemed to have been laid in the land of fair promise, for they appeared to have obliterated from the memory of the forgiving Deb their satirical *bons mots* of the ball night; and the active spinster had contrived to allure her intended prey every day, and for many hours each day, into the perils of her society, ere Daniel had found any opportunity of enjoying a conference with his old ally, the sagacious William Bird; and, therefore, had not immediately heard the plot of Mrs. Titterton and Miss Daggerly against the fair fame of Miss De la Warr, so providentially betrayed to Bird.

This intelligence of Bird's at once converted Daniel into a determined foe of Miss Daggerly's; one ready to arm cap-à-pee, as the champion of the beautiful Olivia: but, although indignation seemed to absorb the whole of the communication in the knight-errantry of stand-

ing forth as an avenger, yet it had not failed in opening the eyes of Daniel to the insidious disposition of his fair assailant; and at length led him to the mental query of, "Why Miss Daggerly wanted to be so thick with him?" when his intuitive shrewdness answered the question full as promptly as worldly experience could have done; and being not a little of a humourist, he determined, whilst his own safety was secured through his suspicion of her design, to let her sport on in speculation; but not until a day or two previous to his execution of poetical justice, had it struck upon his imagination, how amply he could avenge Miss De la Warr by planning for diamond to cut diamond.

Bird, personifying Daniel Lancefield in his masquerade habit of Romeo, took off the ready Juliet; not to the cell of Father Laurence, but to the barrack, whither she was inveigled by her companion, under the belief of its being an inn, where they were to obtain fresh horses to carry them out of the track of pursuit.

The alteration in the voice and accents of her supposed simple prey, Miss Daggerly ascribed to the champaign she knew Daniel had drunk unsparingly, to aid his spirits in the process of the diversity of character he had undertaken; but she shrank not from an inebriated companion, trusting that deep sleep would soon supersede reflections which might lead so evidently a capricious being to repentance, and a sudden return to Rosindale.

But it is not our intention to accompany Miss Daggerly through the scene of her dismay, on discovering the trick which had been retorted on her scheming faculties; her hysterics, her revilings, and offers of rewards for liberation and for concealment of her elopement, so disgraceful in all its bearings: but neither the village lawyer, nor the martial horn she had to deal with, were to be operated upon; for without one particle of refinement in their natural composition, they felt nothing like an acquired substitute for softening their conduct to a woman who had performed so degrading a part; they, therefore, would not

enter into any of her terms for restoration to her friends; but threatened her with all things, in loss of fame, and in prosecutions to be instituted by Sir Cornelius Lancefield for her conspiracy with Mrs. Titterton, to draw into marriage the infant Daniel: and by General De la Warr, for her conspiring with the aforesaid Mrs. Titterton against the fair fame of his niece; and from all of which nothing could rescue her, but her placing her signature to a paper, acknowledging, in unequivocal terms, herself and confederate "infamous defamers of Miss Olivia De la Warr."

In vain Miss Daggerly protested against the evidence of Bird, upon the plea of his natural misconception of the language in which she had conversed with her friend; but that plea quickly found refutation by oral testimony; yet still, nothing could induce her condemnation of her own veracity, without the mitigation inserted:—"That she had proof to adduce of the said Olivia De la Warr's property having been lost at the gaming table; and of the said Olivia De la Warr having been a principal

agent in raising monies upon the aforesaid property, by means of Moses Lara, a Jew."

This paper, which emancipated Miss Daggerly from her captivity, being at length delivered to General De la Warr, he hastened to his niece, to demand from her power to refute this diabolical slander of Miss Daggerly's.

Olivia, after deeply blushing, and a little hesitation, at length replied in a full statement, "of Sir Walter Melmoth having employed Lady Melmoth to induce her to raise money on her funded property, to clear off a heavy mortgage that was involving Sir Walter in absolute ruin, through the exorbitant interest which his improvident father had bound himself and heirs to pay: but, that having had Sir Walter's solemn word for repaying every shilling which Lara had advanced, ere he set out to the continent, she had no doubt of his having redeemed his pledge by that time, as he was either gone or going in a few days to America, to look after some lately bequeathed property there;" and concluded this confession to her dismayed uncle, by adding:—

"That as the Melmoths had entreated her inviolable secrecy upon a transaction that could only be of importance to them, she, of course, would never have mentioned it, had not the fact transpired, and reduced her to the painful necessity of thus breaking faith with her poor friends by this distressing acknowledgment."

The dismay of the General had now arrived at its climax; for he no longer cherished a doubt of the poor credulous girl, left by her thoughtless father to the care of unprincipled designers, having been thus bereaved of her noble funded portion; and his prompt determination was to proceed forthwith to London, to develope the truth of the promised reimbursements, and to act accordingly.

The sombre rays of twilight had put forth the first shades of coming gloom, to extenuate Albert from compact broken by presenting himself before his sorrowing friend, ere the day was done; when full of that sympathy his

ardent heart was grieved by, he thought not of prohibiting the attendance of the nimble Carlo, who therefore accompanied him on his rapid way; for though his heart was saddened by the woes of Cameron, it panted to be with him, to give him, even by its sighs, the touching consolation of friendship's tender sympathy.

But although rapid were the paces of Fauconberg towards the chamber of Cameron, Carlo, still in active career, performed his wonted part of advanced-guard to the place of destination; but, ere the swiftly returning echo of his master's steps resounded the full ascent of the spiral stairs of the turret, which terminated in the long corridor which led to the apartments of haunted reputation, the ear of the animal, never at fault, caught the sound of alarm; and with the piercing bark, that comes spontaneously, as the herald of no imaginary danger, Carlo darted forward like the shaft that aims destruction at the foe; and the now equally alarmed, and equally intrepid Fauconberg, darted with him: but it was only

to hear, with more electrifying thrill, from within, a shriek! even such as mortal desperation utters, when fate appears with that inevitable terrific fiat, from which there is no rescue.

The harbinger was such as to leave not one ray of expectation that Cameron could have escaped the peril which had elicited the cry of hopelessness. Yet Fauconberg was not prepared to find his chamber tenantless; bearing in its desolation every horror of imagination to fill up the void, almost annihilating to each faculty of his terror-stricken friend; but whom Carlo left not one moment in doubt of the pass through which the disappearance of Cameron had been effected; for the sagacious animal darted upon some planks of the tesselated oaken flooring of the chamber, where he whined and growled as he furiously scratched with his mighty paws, as if his strength and purpose were in exertion to force open the way for prompt pursuit.

Though with a heart as thrillingly alive to every tender susceptibility of feeling as any

female sentimentalist might envy, the self-possession of Fauconberg was firmly masculine. It never slumbered; it was ever, like his innate piety and courage, steadily at its post. To pursue Cameron by that pass, even had it been practicable, he instantly felt conviction would be unavailing. He had never entertained a doubt that the tradition of supernatural appearances had arisen out of a subterraneous passage, communicating by some hidden track with those apartments; and which, from the castle's proximity to the sea-shore, he naturally concluded held its line from the beach; and through which, most probably, under the guise of supernatural machinery, had in some periods been used for the accommodation of contraband traffic.

To the shore, therefore, the hopes of Albert turned his expectation for the rescue of poor Cameron; and darting into his own chamber, he armed himself with every supply for warfare deposited there; and where, ringing an alarm for Dermod, to accelerate their meeting on his way down stairs, he sprang into that

celerity of movement which presented the only chance for his being in time to deliver Cameron from what, in horror and dismay, he believed the diabolical machinations of the vindictive Ramirez.

The unusually emphatic sounding of his master's bell brought the faithfully attached Dermod on the wings of the wind, anticipating some fearful indisposition in Cameron; and in dismay he beheld his "master dear!" like one possessed;—a few words sufficed to tell the tale of horror, as Albert put the pistols he had brought for Dermod's use into this brave ally's hands; and in one moment more, at the portal, he gave orders to the hind for all the men employed in husbandry about the castle, that were not gone to their homes for the night, instantly to follow him to the beach, armed as circumstances might permit.

Closely attended by his never-failing adherents, Dermod and Carlo, the now impetuous Fauconberg winged his way down the rugged cliffs, towards the beach; the appalling shriek of Cameron sounding in his ears, and the

communication of the preceding night from the mysterious gitano, floating before his vision, leading him on, as if by the power of magical impellants, to more, and still more celerity, in the speed of his descent.

The gloom of twilight, anticipated and augmented by the deeply encompassed casements of the Gothic castle, seemed here on the unshaded cliffs to have, in pity, retreated, to beam a lengthened ray of the departed sun to light poor Albert in his intensity of gaze for chasms in the dark indentures of the shelving rocks, for the vainly cherished hope of there detecting the termination of a passage, through which he might either see his captive friend borne on his conveyance to some craft in waiting for the base purpose, or discover some clew to induce his entrance, where, under the guidance of pitying Heaven, to penetrate his way to the rescue of his friend.

The eyes of Dermod rested only on his master, as usual, to perform his shadow and his shield, when danger threatened him; but Carlo's eyes had glanced in another direction,

even upon the wide expanse of water that calmly rippled to the shelving brink, over which they hung. In a moment Carlo started —stopped, and barked his angry recognition of what his wonderous instinct seemed at once to proclaim to him as that they sought.

Thus directed in their observation, Fauconberg and Dermod now beheld with dismay a boat making from shore, towards a brig at anchor in the offing. Its distance when they first beheld the boat, might be about two furlongs from the shore, twice that number from where they stood: there appeared no person in the boat to actuate its movements; yet it rapidly glided on its course by the perceptible plying of oars, but from which no sound issued. Fauconberg now rushed headlong down the cliff, in the direction the boat was taking; but this bold and fearless descent seemed as the intuitive impulse of despair—for how was he to cleave the waves, and plough the ocean to the rescue of his friend? whose cries,

"Mournfully hoarse; oft ceasing from his plaint,
Short intervals of weary woe! —
Across his fancy came."*

But precipitated by the impetuosity of his ardent friendship to the base of the cliffs, Fauconberg, in joyful amaze, there beheld a boat lightly undulating on its liquid bed, breaking gently by each movement still more and more from the insecurity of its careless mooring, as if in preparation for its launch out upon the darkening waters of the deep.

"Dermod, come on!" exclaimed Fauconberg: "Heaven is with us; for here, behold this boat, so providentially ready for our embarkation!"

"Faith, and wid a plank, bending in obeisance to invite us in," responded Dermod; "but, master dear, just be letting Carlo and myself enter it a morsel first, to see if its humbugging us the saygulls are; for, on my safe conscience, but this same boat seems mighty like the craft of witchery."

* Thomson.

But what were the thoughts of Dermod, when, as he spoke, a figure of almost preternatural altitude arose like the spiral ascending of a vapour from the bosom of the waters—a female of fantastic form, as occupant of this apparently enchanted bark—but who, ere Carlo had time to utter a note of admiration, or Dermod to articulate an interjection, Fauconberg hailed as his old friend, the gitano of the valley of Santa Barbara.

"Do you believe me your true friend?" she replied, in her Castilian dialect; "one in whom you can sufficiently confide, to follow over deep and troubled waters to the mouth of dangerous enterprise, to rescue others from fell plots of the vindictive?"

"I have firm confidence in you," Albert replied; "but, alas! there is no time for parley. My friend is gone; taken hence by the machinations of Ramirez. In pity, I implore you, lend me your boat, that I—"

"That you may be fired upon, and sunk, in your wild pursuit," she answered. "No, brave man, the project of Ramirez has been

long hatching — so has mine. If you embark with me, I become your commander; and fear me not, but I shall lead you to ultimate success. If you venture with me, you will not only rescue him you call Cameron — but known as Xavier Almedina to my omniscience — from the most barbarous plot that ever fiends and demons projected; but the hapless abbess of Santa Barbara, and the lovely Lady Alvina Dudley. If you fail me, they all must perish."

Fauconberg sprang into the boat.

"*Por vida de Santo Jago!* I knew your heart, brave Briton!" exclaimed the gitano, exultingly: "but you have full half an hour to pause upon your oars, ere we can with prudence venture to my galley, about two leagues off, behind yon point to the westward. You must accompany me to the coast of Granada. I have every store provided for your accommodation which gold could purchase; you need, therefore, Senor, bring no ducats with you: but you may wish to make arrangements at your home, which that spare

half hour can accomplish. I will await you here. I do not fear your disappointing me. *Adios, adios! Dios le guarde!*"

With all that fleet activity the occasion called for, Fauconberg, accompanied by Dermod, hastened to the castle to procure a supply of apparel for the voyage, and to write a few necessary lines to those friends whom he was thus calamitously called from; nor did it shake his resolution from his desperate undertaking, though it shook his heart with sad and sickening perturbation, when he thought of his mother, his sisters, and many of those friends whom it was more than probable he should never behold.

"Dermod," said Albert, as they flew up the ascent to the castle, "I have no time to lay before you the dangers which in possibility may be the attendants of this expedition."

"Ah, then, sure your honour has no call to do that same," returned the almost breathless Dermod; "for was not myself inured to spiciments of them, master Albert dear, whilst Ramirez, and bad luck to him, was murder-

ing the whole blessed lot of us, in thought, word, and deed, every time the heart of him, the blood-hound! bate wid its pulse of iron crulty?"

"Well, then, my dear Dermod, knowing what is probably before me—"

"I won't be behind you, if that's what you mane, master Albert," responded Dermod, in a tone of wounded feeling. "Sure, you don't think I'll be the *spalpeen* to give up my share of your honour's dangers in such a cowardly fashion as that same? No, your honour, share and share alike began wid our horn-book; and whilst the book of life contains our two names widin it, Dermod O'Chanter's shall appear by the side of your honour's, whether it be in sickness or sorrow, in peril or in death."

"May Heaven preserve you with its invulnerable shield, my own kind Dermod!" said the grateful Fauconberg, wiping the tear of sensibility from his eyes, as they now entered upon the draw-bridge of the castle; where they met their fellow soldiers, who had turned

their arms into the ploughshare, under the auspices of Nettlethorp, all issuing forth to aid them; but whose services were unfortunately too late for the hoped-for rescue of poor Cameron.

Men accustomed to the rapid routes of our long peninsular war were adepts in the art of expeditious arrangement of compressed baggage, so that Fauconberg was not long detained from the very hasty lines he found it possible to leave for his friends; and, true to his appointment, he proceeded to the beach to join the gitano, where he was most graciously received by this mysterious being; who, now visible in her bark, appeared feathering her muffled oars upon the fast silvering bosom of the deep, like some water witch in cockle shell, awaiting its fellow sprites to join in aquatic sports.

The embarkation of our adventurer and his faithful adherents was quickly effected; and Fauconberg, launched on unknown peril, soon receded from the shore, where, in lofty pre-

eminence, stood the rugged cliff, which on its summit bore

> "The lonely tower,
> ——————— Whose mournful chambers hold,
> So night-struck fancy dreams, the yelling ghost,"*

now dropping its lengthening shadows, to find, through the magic of inversion, that spangled canopy, whose night-lamps brightening into splendour, paved with quivering gems the liquid track the boat now glided over.

* Thomson.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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